

ESSAYS

MARY ELIZA GULLY COLE



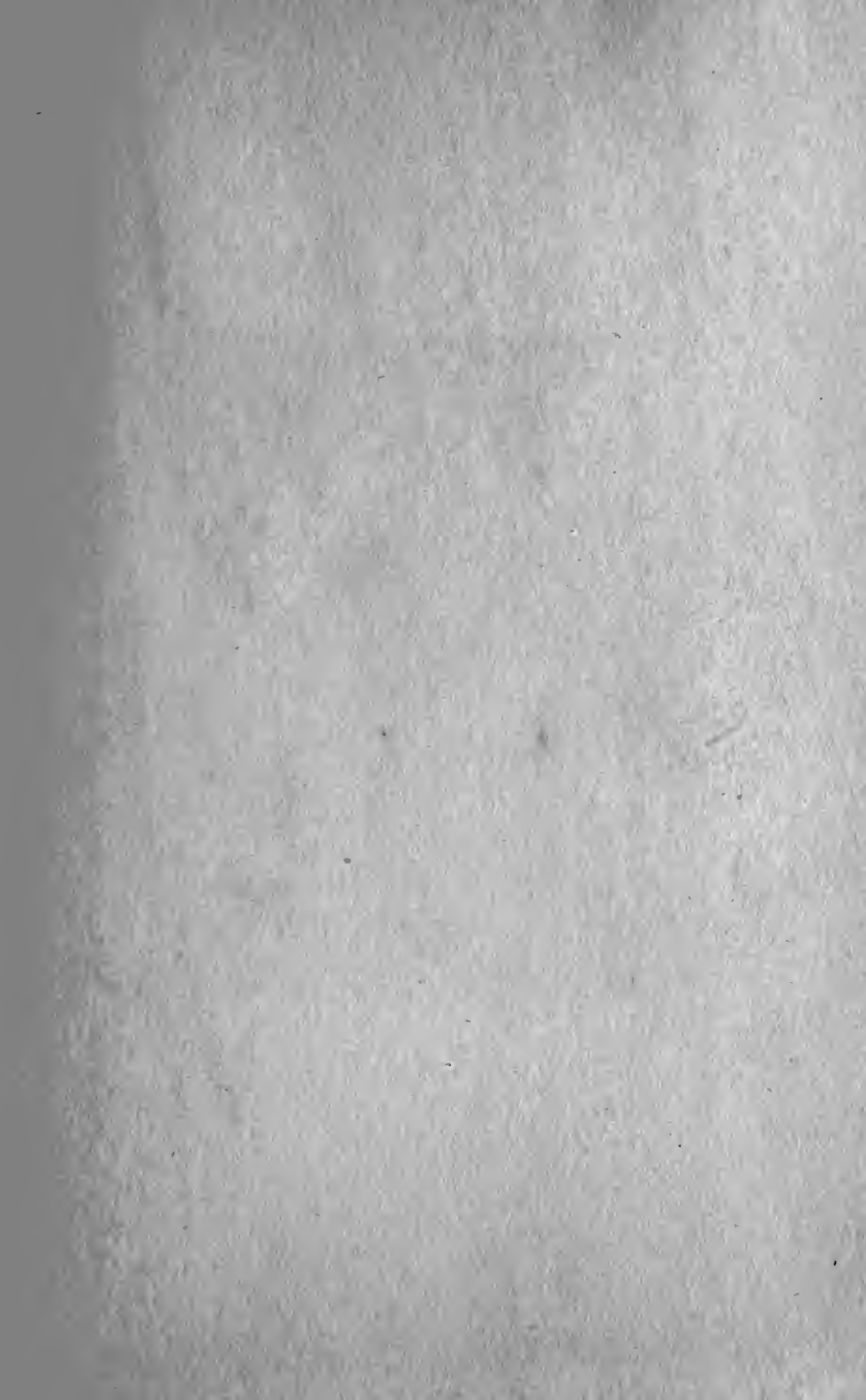


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ESSAYS





VITTORIA COLONNA.

ESSAYS

BY

Mary Eliza Gully Cole



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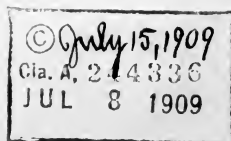
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By

MARY ELIZA GULLY COLE.

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**Dedicated
to
MY SONS**

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**THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE ITALIAN
RENAISSANCE**

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THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE.

A GREAT period, like a great individual, lives in the heart of mankind, creating vivid pictures around which the imagination loves to linger. Thus the period of the Italian Renaissance will ever remain a shining mark holding us captive by its brilliant achievements in art and literature, its fascinating personalities, its monuments in stone and marble, its materialization of beauty and harmony in unfading colors on canvas and wall, its undying truths written in the lives and deaths of saints and scholars, and an ethereal atmosphere of fine poetic sentiment which wraps the name of Italy in a mantle of hazy beauty! If we can pierce through this shimmering mantle, which dazzles our eyes, and discern wherein the world-spirit breathed upon this sunny land, bringing forth some

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of its rarest flowers, to draw the human family upward and onward to that goal of perfection towards which all life tends, a dignity, grandeur and vitality will be added to our understanding and appreciation of this great epoch, and will enable us to see more clearly the historic trend of events. We shall see that this birth or re-birth, with its far-reaching, brilliant results, was followed by death or transformation, which was only another step, another birth into something higher and better which the future will realize and whose birth-throes we are feeling to-day. For "every art ends in a science, and all poetry in a philosophy, for science and philosophy do but translate into precise formula the original conceptions, which art and poetry render sensible by imaginary figures." A mine of wisdom may be gathered by a comprehensive glance at any world-historic epoch, and for this reason is ever worthy of our careful study.

In looking over the higher forms of social life, during the period of the Italian Renaissance, the first important element

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we discover is the almost entire eradication of the idea of Caste. Social life was based upon the existence of an educated and cultured class. There were a few exceptions to this rule, but the whole current of the time was set steadily towards the fusion of classes. The reasons for this were: First, the study of antiquity; second, the immense power the Condottirie acquired; third, the intensely marked individuality men attained; fourth, the widespread influence of humanism; fifth, a reaction from ecclesiastical rule and authority and a partial return to the freedom of paganism. Each one of these influences was a strong, clear and distinct movement in itself, and volumes might be and have been devoted to each; they are circles within circles.

Personal achievement, nobility and valor were the watchwords of this civilization. Dante, to give this idea emphasis, calls "Nobility the sister of philosophy." While Dante does not belong in any strict sense to the revival of learning, yet "to him in a truer sense than to any other poet belong the double glory of immorta-

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lizing in verse the centuries behind him, while he inaugurated the new age."

Naples offers an exception to the rest of Italy in this grand progressive movement. In 1442 the last King of the Anjou dynasty was conquered by Alfonso of Aragon, and under the Aragonese and Spanish Kings it was ruled by Viceroys until the peace of Utrecht, when it was annexed to the possessions of the house of Hapsburg. "Her pride, vanity and strict isolation more than any other cause excluded her from the spiritual movement of the Renaissance, and the establishment of the Aragonese government completed the work and brought about those social changes, obedience to French and Spanish ideas which only followed in the rest of Italy a hundred years later." The principal features of this disastrous transformation were a contempt for work and a passion for titles. It is a curious fact that this indolence and this passion for titles still exist in Naples, and a Principi (or Prince) may be found loitering on every street corner, possessing neither a virtue nor a ducat. Out of this desire

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for titles and love of display grew the fondness for the tournament. In the middles ages, knighthood stood for all that was brave and noble, and we owe much to it. The good that was in it has survived, and the obligations of the world to it as an ameliorating and civilizing agent are very great. This spirit has been preserved to us by the poets, Spenser and Ariosto. But knighthood was never of any great importance in Italy; first, because of the rise of the Italian Republic; second, the development of the commercial spirit and the introduction of the Condottirie were all circumstances unfavorable to the growth of this idea. Poggio and Sacchetti exhausted their irony upon the tournament, and left us ludicrous pictures of forlorn knights riding still more forlorn horses, and suggested conferring the honor of knighthood upon the lower animals and inanimate objects, and Cervantes a century and half later gave the final blow to knight-errantry and its false pretences in his inimitable Don Quixote.

Personal skill, dexterity and fine physical strength were cultivated to the ut-

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most, and a graceful and dextrous "tilting with the lance" was a fashionable pastime. Cæsar Borgia delighted to exhibit his marksmanship by shooting condemned criminals in the yard of the Vatican, and could fell an ox with one blow. Alberti could "pierce the strongest armor with his arrows and so deftly fling a coin that it touched the highest point of a church or palace roof."

Wealth was considered as one of the elements of refined life, but only because it gave its possessor leisure for cosmopolitan culture, which was the highest ideal of that period.

The dress of a nation, as of an individual, gives indication of its general culture; earnest and deliberate study entered into every department of life, and the Italians pursued the idea of dress with persistent and artistic purpose. But the idea of dress was not confined to women; even serious men considered it an important element in the perfection of the individual.

The people were as a nation vain and fond of display, and as birth gave little

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distinction, each individual cultivated all personal qualities, grace and affluence of speech, dignified and courtly behavior, perfect physical strength and beauty, artistic dressing and great learning.

One of the marked peculiarities in regard to personal adornment was the desire to form a conventional type, disguise nature by every conceivable device. The reasons for this were the effort made for perfect youthful beauty and the representation of the mysteries, when masks and many other artificial conditions were allowable to produce dazzling and brilliant effects.

“Blonding” the hair is no modern invention, for this was the much desired color, and silver and gold-colored thread was often used to decorate the heads of matron and maid. This passion for artificial adornment, though ridiculed by poets and philosophers, and held up to scorn by preachers, ruled the fancy of woman with the true tyranny of fashion, excepting now and then, when appealed to by some inspired fanatic, like Savanarola, who, possessing the key to woman’s

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nature, touched her conscience; then she humbly cast her vanities upon the funeral pyre erected in the public square.

Italy had all Europe for a school of manners, and the Renaissance produced her Lord Chesterfield in one named Giavano Della Casa, a Florentine, who wrote a book, giving in a delicate and minute way details for good behavior, "prescribed with the same tact with which a moralist discerns the highest ethical truths." One enthusiastic writer says of Cosimo de Medici, "That to see him at table, a perfect model of the man of old, was of a truth a charming sight."

Fine tact was cultivated as a universal social duty, and was not, as we are often led to believe from its extreme rarity, an especial gift of the Gods. Lorenzo the Magnificent, by some historians called the "father of literature," was supreme over his circle by his wonderful and exquisite tact; he entertained all men with equal grace; his large erudition enabled him to converse with the theologian of theology, with the scholar of letters, with the musician of music, with the artist of art, and

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the scientist of science. His almost unbounded knowledge gave him a power over his contemporaries which few men ever possessed.

Nothing was neglected in this egoistic age which would add to the elegance or comfort of human existence, and even in domestic life we find a thorough system of training throughout the household; there was organization, discipline and education.

While other nations were walking or riding horseback, the Italians were driving over well-paved streets in fine carriages, and enjoying the luxuries of costly carpets, fine furniture, abundance of exquisite linen, splendid tapestries, magnificent china and dresses and ornaments of oriental beauty and splendor.

Music was an important element in social life, and under the genius and direction of Palestrina underwent important modification. Before Palestrina's time secular tunes formed the principal theme of all masses and psalms.

Language, whether written or spoken, was held to be an object of respect and the

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crowning glory of a dignified and noble behavior. The Italians anticipated by three centuries the French Salon, for in the social circle all subjects were fully and freely discussed, and the loftiest problems of human life were included in their conversation. "The production of noble thoughts was not, as was commonly the case in the North, a work of solitude, but of society."

Dante raised the Italian language from comparative rudeness to the highest refinement, and it was he who wrote the first complete treatise on any modern language. There were numerous dialects in Italy at this time. Dante's classification gives fourteen (14), another writer gives seventeen (17). One of the most vigorous and important efforts of the Renaissance was made for one classical language. "Language is here conceived apart from its uses in poetry, its highest function being clear, simple, intelligent utterance in short speeches, epigrams and answers. This faculty was admired as among no other nation, excepting the Greeks and Romans."

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Women, no less than men, strove for a "complete individuality," and Michael Angelo and Aritino were no more a product of the peculiar atmosphere of the times than Vittoria Colonna or Ranata of Ferara. Women were the queens and centers of the social circles, and became illustrious without in any way compromising their reputations. The reasons for this were that women strove for beauty and strength of character as well as physical perfection, and because "she was conscious of a state full of danger and opportunity." Intellectuality and high sentiment held a large place in women's lives, where usually sentimentality and emotion reign supreme.

By a careful study of the manner in which a nation finds its amusements and recreations, a very just estimate may be formed of its civilization, for these will bear unmistakable impress of the thoughts and aims of the period. There has been no time in the history of the world when so much talent, invention and such fabulous sums of money were employed for the purpose of pleasure and amusement.

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Such was the magnificence of these displays that "whole volumes might be written on the architecture alone." Leonardi da Vinci did not disdain to use his divine gifts to invent machinery and personally to direct the costumes and decorations for many of these festivals, and Andrea Del Sarto painted chariots used in the processions. The middle ages were essentially ages of Allegory, but the particular form of these festivals and processions may be traced directly to the Romans. The conditions necessary to make these displays successful and national were wealth, leisure and education among the nobility and appreciation and understanding on the part of the masses. It is a striking proof of the universal culture of the Italians that they did so understand the wonderful Allegory, the antique representations and the classic allusions. It was considered a part of an aristocratic breeding to be critical in such matters, and the masses were familiar with at least the poetic basis of these shows.

"Both plastic art and poetry were accustomed to represent famous men and

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women; for instance, the Divine Comedy of Dante, the Trionfi of Petrarch, the Amorosa Vissione of Boccaccio, all of these works constructed on this principle and the great diffusion of culture which took place under the influence of antiquity, made the nation familiar with the historic element." In Florence the several quarters of the city were in early times organized with a view to such exhibitions.

In 1304, "Hell was represented by Scaffolda and boats in the river Arno. By mechanical appliances figures of angels were made to rise and float in the air. The festival which called for exceptional treatment was the Feast of Corpus Christi. At this were represented a suffering Christ amid singing cherubs, the Last Supper with a figure of Thomas Aquinas, the combat between the archangel Michael and the devil, fountains of wine and orchestras of angels, the scenes of the Resurrection, and finally on the Square, before the Cathedral, the tomb of the Virgin. It opened after High Mass and the benediction, and the Mother

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of God ascended singing to Paradise, where she was crowned by her Son and let into the presence of the Eternal." The house of Borgia particularly distinguished itself by magnificent displays of this character, as also the Court of Ferrara, but owing doubtless to the introduction of Calvinistic ideas, which found much favor and sympathy there, the representations were chiefly secular. The Venetian festivals were marvels of fantastic splendor, not on land alone, but on the Grand Canal, where in one case we read that "A round universe floated, so immense that a ball was given inside of it." The Roman carnivals were more varied in the fifteenth century than elsewhere, and they were the first to disclose the effect of a great procession by gaslight.

The Florentine Carnival surpassed the Roman in a certain class of processions, for instance: "among a crowd of maskers on foot and on horseback appeared a huge chariot, and upon it allegorical figures, or groups of figures, with their proper accompaniments, as Jealousy with four

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spectacled faces on one head; the four Temperaments with the planets belonging to them; the three Fates; Prudence enthroned above Hope and Fear, which lay bound before her; the four Seasons; also the famous chariot of death; and the naval car—a ship fitted up with great splendor.” Often fine scenes from mythology were grandly represented, which would fill volumes to describe.

Napoleon the First, imitating the victorious Roman warrior, made his return after one of his campaigns as magnificent as possible, and was laurel-crowned amid enthusiastic admirers.

The chief features of the social life of the Renaissance were: First, the partial equalization of the classes; second, woman's social equality with man; third, a system of æsthetic behavior; fourth, a vigorous effort for the perfection of the individual; fifth, a desire to become famous and immortal by achievement; sixth, an effort for pure and lofty forms of speech; seventh, an intense love of scenic display, which is shown in the carnivals, festivals and processions. In a word all

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departments of life were elevated to the rank of a fine art. The mind becomes almost fatigued and dazed in looking over this period of social splendor and immense intellectual activity. All sacred and profane history, all mythological and legendary history, philosophy, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, many of the sciences and mechanical arts, were combined to produce a perfection of life never before attained and whose brilliancy dazzles us even to-day.

Much of this gorgeous coloring was transitory. But there were developed at this period divine truths, made manifest and permanent through art and imperishable as only art can be. But Italy was rapidly passing the zenith of her glory. Art was loved and sought, not for its own sake, but only in so far as it would excite the appetite for selfish pleasure and add to the amusement of the people. This soon degenerates into a love of enervating ease and luxury, which marks the decay of any nation. But the corruption of Church and State, and the licentiousness of the ruling classes, though an outgrowth of a

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high state of civilization, the excrescence and fungus growth which must end in final rot and decay—these were not the essence, the creative spirit of the Renaissance; had they been, it would not live to-day as one of the great world-historic epochs. It was an age of surpassing egoism; each individual posed before the world for his own glory. It was the egoism born of man's becoming self-conscious and the absolute devotion of a nation to the perfection of the individual, regardless of the higher law, which recognizes the broader spiritual truth that man's first duty and keenest pleasure is a loving sacrifice to his brother man.

VITTORIA COLONNA

VITTORIA COLONNA.

THE most beautiful woman, as well as the most beautiful character, of the Italian Renaissance was Vittoria Colonna, the one and only love of Michael Angelo. This fact is of itself enough to immortalize her. Not only the greatest artist of the world loved her, but the whole nation bowed in admiration of her beauty, and reverence for her nobility and purity of character.

Many women have been loved by great men before. It is said of George Sand that "Jules Sandeau loved her dearly, Chopin madly, Alfred de Musset passionately," but the love which Michael Angelo bore Vittoria was a beautiful reverential adoration, somewhat as Dante loved his Beatrice.

Vittoria Colonna was the daughter of Fabrizio Colonna, of a noble and princely

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Italian family, originating back in the eleventh century. Her mother was Agnese di Montifelto, the daughter of the Duke of Urbine (the birthplace of Raphael). Vittoria was born in the Castle of Marino, on the Lago d'Albano, in February, 1490, and at an early age, scarcely four years, she was affianced by her parents to Ferdinando Francesco d'Avalos, son of the Marquis of Pescara. For a term of years she was associated and educated with her future husband, under the care of a sister of Pescara, in the little town of Ischia, a beautiful island in the Mediterranean, belonging to the Kingdom of Naples.

Very little is given of Vittoria's early years, yet imagination pictures her as a sweet, beautiful, thoughtful child, deep, strong and unchanging in her affections. This is evinced by her devotion to her young lover, for although others sought her in marriage, she would listen to no other proposals. Ischia is in sight of the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and in full view of blazing Vesuvius. With all these grand, natural phenomena

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around her, with the blue skies and poetic atmosphere, close association with rare and cultivated minds, and all the refinements of a high state of social and intellectual culture, we have all the conditions which assist in producing a character of rare beauty and symmetry. The poetic temperament could scarcely find a more congenial atmosphere, where nature and art united in creating, not only the soft, sensuous and pleasing, but the epic and grand.

At the early age of seventeen years, Vittoria and Pescara were married. The wedding is described as unusually brilliant even for those days of princely magnificence, and there is a long and curiously interesting list of the bridal gifts, which were truly royal in costliness and splendor.

Very pertinently Trollope says, "For two years she was happy and wrote no poetry."

The most authentic portrait of Vittoria is one preserved in the Colonna Gallery at Rome. "It is a beautiful face, of the true Roman type, perfectly regular, of exceed-

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ing purity of outline, and perhaps a little heavy about the lower part of the face, but the calm, large, thoughtful eyes and superbly developed forehead secure it from any approach toward an expression of sensualism, the fulness of the lips is only sufficient to indicate that sensitiveness to, and appreciation of, beauty, which constitutes an essential element in the poetic temperament. The hair is of the bright golden tint that Titian loved so well to paint."

There is also one in England, supposed to have been painted by Michael Angelo, a description of which is given us by Grimm. "We have before us an aged woman. There is no longer the fair hair which once invested her with such a charm; a white widow's veil, brought low down upon her brow, envelops her head and falls over her bosom and shoulders. A tall figure, dressed in black velvet, upright, and sitting without support on a chair, the circular simply-formed back of which is grasped in front by her right hand, while the other is lying on an open book in her lap. There is a grand repose

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in her features, a slightly pained compression about the eyes and mouth; she appears aged, but not decrepit; and the deep lines which fate has drawn are noble and energetic."

These two portraits are typical of the perfect woman Vittoria was, the first giving us the beauty, grace and physical loveliness which nature sometimes bestows upon her children, and with the richer accompaniment of a fine, strong mind and warm, constant heart in its youth and energy. Even in the first picture, the promise of that dignified and grand old age was foreshadowed, the serene and noble evening of a most glorious morning of human life.

Pescara, following the example of all noblemen of his time, entered the army, and chose for the motto on his shield, "On this, or by this," and engaged in the war between France and Venice. He "received from Vittoria at parting a superb pavilion and an embroidered standard, as well as some palm leaves, in token of the hope that he would return crowned with honor."

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During her husband's absence, Vittoria occupied herself with her correspondence with him, and the study of literature, of the best ancient and modern authors. Pescara won distinguished honors, as a brilliant General, and was offered the Kingdom of Naples, a most tempting bribe. It is not absolutely sure that he contemplated accepting the bribe, or turning traitor to Charles of Spain, because the plans were unsuccessful, but Pescara's character was laid open to the severest criticism of his own and of succeeding times. In this respect Vittoria stood in noble contrast to her husband, as not a shadow rests upon her in this affair. Her letters to him place her most nobly and loyally before the world.

In 1525 Pescara died. Vittoria's grief was overwhelming, and for a time she lost her reason. She desired to retire to the Convent of San Silvestro, and did so for a short time, and she would gladly have remained within its sheltering walls, but the Pope, with the wisdom and Machiavellian policy, peculiar to Popes and princes of the time, absolutely forbade

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this. After a year at Rome, she returned to Ischia, and began those poems, on the loss of her husband, which form an "In Memoriam," and a deep and constant study of the best masters of ancient and modern thought.

Vittoria was at this period of her life the most beautiful woman in all Italy. Cities and Courts quarreled over her as a guest, she was the friend and correspondent of many of the greatest men of the day; the intimate friend of Cardinals Pole and Contarini and Bernardino Ochino, men in whose minds was kindled the fire of revolution, which finally resulted in the Italian Reformation; Ischia was the center of a little circle of the most illustrious and renowned poets and scholars; and Vittoria was the Priestess of that circle. One is reminded of that wonderful Athenian circle, where Aspasia reigned supreme, but in Ischia a purer, loftier divinity inspired her devotees; one gives us the Pagan ideal, the other the Christian, and again later the little circle of Weimar, where Charlotte Von Stein, Goethe and Schiller held high court and high thought.

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Trollope tries to make much of what he calls the deteriorating influence of Pescara on Vittoria's character, and speaks particularly of her lack of patriotism, and suggests the husband's influence as a possible cause, quoting Tennyson's lines:

"Thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse
To sympathize with clay.
As the husband is, the wife is.
Thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature
Will have weight to drag thee down."

Trollope also speaks ironically of her long years of lamentation over the loss of her husband, and suggests that she was doubtless as much in earnest as Petrarch in his adoration for Laura.

All of these accusations are at variance with the facts of the history of Vittoria's life and character. In the first place, as the biographers have given us the lives of the two, Vittoria and Pescara, Vittoria's seems to be absolutely without flaw, or speck, or blemish. Second, the husband and wife were separated by war two years

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after marriage, and she only saw him at rare intervals, after he entered the army, before his death; therefore, his influence in moulding her opinions was doubtless very slight, and in the few instances given she held her own ideas of right with unyielding pertinacity. Third, patriotism is not an inborn sentiment, but a plant of a peculiar civilization, and the lack of patriotism could be brought against many of the best minds of the age, "for patriotism," says Simonds, "ceased to be an instinct, just as the moral and religious sensibilities were blunted. Instead of patriotism, the Italians of the Renaissance were inflamed with a desire for cosmopolitan culture." This desire for culture, which was the highest ideal of the time, Vittoria possessed in an eminent degree.

It is an open question as to what extent Vittoria espoused the Calvinistic or "new opinions," as they were then called. Her poems show that she at least thought much upon the subject then agitating all Italy. As she was an honored guest at the Court of Ferrara, she undoubtedly met and conversed with many of the most

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noted reformers. Calvin enjoyed the friendship of Margaret of Navara, and the patronage of Renata of Ferrara, these two noble women were dear and close friends of Vittoria's, and we may imagine high and glorious conversation when this "triumvirate of noble women" met and held communion with such a mind as Calvin's. Seeds of thought, sown upon soil so well prepared for truth, doubtless bore fruit. But it was fruit not destined to ripen to perfection.

"While Vittoria was in Rome, she was received by the Pope, as became a Princess of her rank. The Emperor, while in Rome, visited her in her palace; the Cardinals Pole and Contarini, the heads of the Ochino party, were her intimate friends; and those not linked with her by the interests of religious reform were attracted by her beauty and amiability, and that which is styled by her contemporaries her learning. People were proud to be able to reckon themselves as her friends, adorers or proteges, for her connection and the high consideration of her family per-

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mitted her to take many under her protection."

When Vittoria met Michael Angelo he was sixty years old, and she, though no longer young, was still "beautiful, cheerful and full of intellectual activity." She possessed to an eminent degree that chiefest of graces in woman, exquisite tact. Without apparent effort, without coercion, without violence toward any, she seemed to draw the spirits of men to her by a power lofty and ennobling, as it was sweet and enticing. It was the natural, and not the supernatural, result of that perfection of character whose spirituality breathes through their individuality as a fine ethereal essence. It is not a thing to be imitated, it is the essence of character, where virtue and beauty are united with high intelligence.

An instance of this tact is shown where she changed her husband's nephew, whom she adopted, treated and loved as a son (for she was childless), from a wild, reckless youth to become a sober, scholarly man. Again this wonderful tact is shown in the way she arranged to bring Michael

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Angelo into the Church of San Silvestro to meet Francesca de Orlando, a miniature painter from Spain, who desired much to hear Michael Angelo converse upon art, and where Michael Angelo used these noble words upon art: "True painting is only an image of the perfection of God, a shadow of the pencil with which he paints, a melody, a striving after harmony," and "true art is made noble and religious by the mind producing it," and the famous saying, "Art belongs to no land; it comes from Heaven," words which might be written in letters of fire, where all aspirants could read them as they entered the field of Art. They are severe, grand and true.

About 1538, Contarini and Pole had secret hopes of filling the Papal chair after the death of Paul, and in this hope Vittoria fully sympathized, and said after the former's sad and sudden death, "He, Contarini, ought to have been Pope to have made the age happy."

The five years previous to this were years of great happiness to Michael Angelo, as they brought him into compan-

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ionship with the noblest woman of his age, and for the first time in his life he learned the sweet pleasure of yielding his wishes to another, to one who could fully comprehend him and his work, a friendship unique and rare, as it was pure and holy. That he loved her, and would have gladly taken her into his heart and life as a wife, is undoubtedly true, but Vittoria was a widow, in heart and act; that their friendship was purely platonic, and fully, aye, cruelly, recognized as such by Michael Angelo, is evinced by a sonnet addressed to her, which is full of exquisite pathos: "That thy beauty may tarry upon earth, but in possession of a woman more gracious and less severe than thou art, I believe that nature is asking back thy charms, and commending them to gradually leave thee, and she takes them. With thy divine countenance she is adorning a lovely form in the sky; and the God of Love endeavors to give her a compassionate heart; and he receives all my sighs, and he gathers up my tears, and gives them to him who will love her as I love thee. And, happier than I am, he will

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touch her heart perhaps with my torments; and she will afford him the favor which is denied to me."

But another poem still more plainly shows the influence which Vittoria exercised over the somber life and genius of Michael Angelo:

"When Godlike art has, with superior
thought,
The limbs and motions in idea conceived
In simplest form, in humble clay achieved,
Is the first offering into being brought;
Then stroke on stroke, from out the living
rock,
Its promised work the practiced chisel
brings,
And into life a form so graceful springs,
That none can fear for it time's rudest
shock.
Such was my birth; In humble mould I
lay
At first; to be by thee, O! lady high!
Renewed, and to a work more perfect
brought;
Thou givest what lacking is, and fleest
away

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All roughness: Yet what torture lie,
Ere my wild heart can be restrained and
taught."

Though we have many poems and sonnets written by Michael Angelo to Vittoria, there is but one scrap of her writing to him left to us, and that is a letter in the possession of the British Museum, "though eight others are said to be still held back in Florence," and of the many letters of his to her, only one is said to be in existence, and but very few of his poems can be said to be certainly his.

There were many editions of Vittoria's poems published, and they were read with avidity by all her contemporaries.

The tenor and spirit of her poems are of true humility, sustained by hope and faith, a spirit striving for resignation and perfection of soul, a vivid hope of immortality, and increase of life and love, in a world to come. Her early sorrow, in the death of her husband; her deep seclusion for years afterwards, her devotion to good deeds and great thoughts, her intimate acquaintance with the best writers

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of the past, and her intimate personal acquaintance with the highest minds of her own day, her character elevated and purified by the fires of shattered hopes and ambitions, and the complete downfall of her once powerful family, of which she was naturally and loyally proud, all conspired to develop the poetic genius within her. That her poems are somewhat stately and scholastic is perhaps attributable to the style cultivated at the period, but dignified, and full of holy feeling, certainly they are.

With the death of Contarini and the reign of Caraffa, her hopes were crushed for the supremacy of the Ochino party, and she retired to Viterbo. Later came the final blow, when the Castles of the Colonnas were seized, and on her return to Rome, Vittoria found none of her family, and all was wreck and ruin of her earthly hopes of a return of power or prosperity.

She retired into the Benedictine Convent of St. Anne dei Funarie, where she spent the remainder of her life. How powerful was her influence and how

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greatly she was feared by the Inquisition is illustrated by the fact that twenty years after her death a Florentine nobleman was to be burned to death, and one of the principal crimes that was brought against him was the fact that he had been a friend of Vittoria Colonna!

In 1547 Vittoria failed rapidly, and died in February, in the fifty-seventh year of her age. Michael Angelo saw Vittoria up to the last, and it is recorded of him that he said after her death that "he repented of nothing so much as having only kissed her hand, and not her forehead and cheeks also, when he went to her at her last hour." Yet here is shown the habitual, deferential and constant habit of mind and thought which he bore towards Vittoria in her life, so strong that, even in the agony of utter loss, of utter impossibility of reproach or of reciprocation from her he so loved, he did not press upon cheek, or forehead, the passionate kisses which were never permitted in life. It was an instinct of deep reverence, as truly as habit, and shows the great control which this man of fire and genius had

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over himself, and makes luminous to the eyes of a critical world her pure and lofty relation with him. History offers not a parallel case of such noble friendship between a man and woman. There is an almost impenetrable veil over Michael Angelo's influence over Vittoria, but she seems to be one of those deep natures, whose love, once aroused, burns out its fire of passion at the altar of the one and only beloved.

We have no desire, even if we had the right, to peer into her heart, and see there its secret thoughts; but that these thoughts must have been noble and pure in the highest degree is certain; for thought is the well-spring of action, and all the facts of her eventful life were irreproachable. That her influence over Michael Angelo was purifying as the purging fires is shown by his sufferings and strivings; but she also brought to him such happiness as is rarely vouchsafed to man, for a true kindred soul is the chiefest blessing which life can give. She was a benediction to him, entering into his gloomy soul and lifting it up on the eternal heights of

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serenity and peace. She brought to him, though late in his life, sweet inspiration, thorough understanding and sympathetic appreciation; gave him a keener mental and spiritual insight, and brought his whole nature into greater harmony with himself and the world. It enables us to see more clearly the delicate, tender and humane traits in that large, many-sided nature. It was a flood of warm, revivifying, purifying sunshine that burst upon Michael Angelo's life, that illuminated its close, leaving us with a fuller knowledge of the greatest artist, and giving a glimpse of the possibilities of sweetness and gentleness which might have characterized Michael Angelo's life had this sunshine breathed upon his rigid nature in the daily companionship of a happy domestic life. Yet sorrow and solitude are the altars to which genius so often brings the offerings of earthly bliss, and whose fires burn away all grossness, leaving us only the richer inheritance of imperishable truth and beauty.

SAVANAROLA

SAVANAROLA.

IN estimating human character, three things must be considered as primary and formative factors. First, heredity; second, temperament, or constitutional idiosyncrasy; third, environment. In some cases the first has an overwhelming influence, almost depriving the individual of moral responsibility; for instance, inherited insanity, inebriety and kleptomania. Such cases are exceptional, but in every instance that which we inherit remains a strongly modifying influence to the end of life.

The second, temperament, is an attribute that can be largely controlled and modified, but this will be a lifelong work, because it will confront us hourly, and clamor for supremacy.

The third, environment, occupies a large field and embraces a much discussed

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question. The Napoleonic theory, so boastfully expressed when its author was at the zenith of his power, that "man makes his own circumstances," is confronted at once by the dismal picture of this same great conqueror, desolate and defenseless, on the Island of St. Helena.

Men are the architects of their own destiny and weave the principal thread of their lives, and are responsible for their acts, for this is the corner-stone of any true ethical system. It is those who are unable to cope with life heroically who fall back upon the pitiful plea, "Circumstances were against me." This plea began with Adam and has never lacked followers.

In summing up the character of Savonarola we shall find that he was very strongly influenced by his environment; his temperamental weakness he conquered almost wholly.

He was of a delicate, proud, passionate, over-sensitive disposition, but a love of ease he consciously exchanged for a life of rigid austerity; from a shrinking, sensitive spirit he was urged by the fervor

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of his convictions to become the most unyielding and implacable of warriors.

The ancestral blood which flowed in the veins of Savanarola was largely belligerent and warlike, for his ancestors, like himself, were men of Padua. Yet, on the other hand, the religious and artistic feelings were cultivated by contact with noble works of art, which shed their softening and benign influence upon his fiery disposition.

Michael Angelo was but one year younger; Bartolomea but eight years older; Perugino but nineteen years his senior, and Fra Angelica, who wrought those sweet, angelic faces which still live for us, had died only twenty years previously; besides the works of all the other great Masters, who had left their work and spirit indelibly impressed upon the minds and hearts of the people of Italy and the world.

Savanarola's nature partook of the epic as well as of the artistic spirit of his age, and accounts somewhat for the contradictions in his nature.

Savanarola's family belonged to the

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medical profession, his grandfather being a celebrated physician, a man of large and varied learning, devoted to his grandchild and desiring him to follow in his footsteps.

Emilio Castilar says: "Savanarola's education commenced with the physical sciences—a course alien to his natural disposition and contrary to his mental vocation. Fortunately, medicine was not at that time so much separated from arts and letters as at the present." This grandfather exercised much influence over the early years of Savanarola, but died before his education was completed, and his father "restricted the training of his son to the science of the period," viz., a thorough acquaintance with the dogmas of the church. But his mother, a woman of rare gift of mind and heart, exercised a still stronger influence over him, an influence which was never lost, and was overshadowed by a greater and stronger one only for a brief period, when he met and loved the beautiful woman belonging to the patrician Florentine family of Strozzi. But Savanarola's family was

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considered far beneath them, belonging to the medical profession, which, strange as it may appear to us, was not held in very high respect, and to this fact we owe the public work and life of Savanarola, for the family would not hear of an alliance with Savanarola for their lovely daughter.

Thus, before he was twenty years old, the saddest of all disappointments and sorrows had entered his soul. After a long and severe struggle with the love and duty he owed to his beloved mother, between whom and himself existed a most beautiful sympathy and appreciation, he buried himself in the cloister in April (the 24th), 1475, from which he was to emerge years afterwards a melancholy, wornout ascetic, to yield his body to the rack of torture and final death.

Emilio Castilar says of him after this event, entering the cloister, took place: "As a monk, he will have to see things of the world through the walls of the cloister; as a politician, he will have to look upon the cloister through the atmosphere of the world; as a mystic, he will have to

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convert moral and religious rules into coercive laws; as a politician, he must give prayers, sermons and penitential services a certain revolutionary tone, certain war-like complexion. But with all these contradictions—possibly on account of these contradictions—no one in history personifies and represents with better right that new birth of the religious spirit presented in the gospel of Christ which has come down into the midst of society like a leaven of life, quickening all its institutions as with a new soul.”

As with all true men, the political welfare of his country, as well as the moral, filled his heart with keen anxiety and he became thoroughly permeated with the political atmosphere of his time.

The state was unsettled and heated; it was like living under the shadow of a volcano; church and state were at war with each other; Popes and Princes fought for supremacy. The same spirit which actuated the internal wars and dissensions between Guelphs and Ghibilines two centuries before, in Dante's time, filled the hearts of the different factions, and the

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political welfare and freedom of Florence was as dear to the fiery heart of the religious enthusiast as centuries before it had been to the melancholy, far-seeing soul of the divine poet.

Something of the belligerent spirit of the times may be imagined from a little story. When Charles of Spain, with a grand army, pressing to the gates of Florence, said, "If you do not comply with our terms, we will blow our trumpets," he was grandly and proudly answered by Capponi, one of the "ten" who composed the Senate, "Then we will ring our bells." This, the ringing of the bells, was the signal which had been agreed upon by the Florentines to take up arms against the French.

Savonarola was the advance guard of that mighty army which was to come with fire and sword a half-century later to electrify the Kingdoms of Europe, to usher the light of the Reformation, banners of which were borne by Luther, Calvin, Huss and Knox.

Like all great minds, Savonarola was far in advance of his time. The prophetic

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spirit which is one of the elements of genius, but which to the ignorant and superstitious seems miraculous, is only far-sighted wisdom, and a knowledge of universal truth, based upon history and philosophic insight. Savanarola grasped these historical truths because he could "read between the lines," and knew that great changes must come to his beloved Florence. He knew that the tidal wave had swept as far in the direction of depravity and error as it could go, and that reaction must set in. Into his hands he thought was given the command and power to close the floodgates of sin and error, and stop the devastation which must inevitably follow unless the tide was turned.

A great diversity of opinion has ever existed in regard to the character of Savanarola, as well in his own as in subsequent times, and while some have considered him a saint and a martyr, others have stigmatized him as an impostor and demagogue. This difference of opinion was the logical result of the contradictory nature of the man. One writer very per-

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tinently says: "It has been asked how it was that Socrates, after thirty years of public, notorious and efficacious discoursing, lost his hold upon the people of Athens; and the reason has been found to be in the character and circumstances of the Athenians. Savanarola exercised a power and sway over the minds of the people and over the history of Florence never possessed by Socrates, and the people turned against him with a completeness and bitterness which far exceeded the madness of the people of Athens."

By a close analysis of Savanarola's character, we shall find that his uncompromising, unyielding harshness had within itself the sure prophecy of failure, for "we have now learned that to paralyze personal liberty beyond what is absolutely necessary for the protection of others is to induce evils far greater than any which we are able to suppress." That Savanarola did not grasp this principle is evident through all the acts of his eventful life. It is not strange, nor even discreditable that he did not; for liberty and patriotism in the larger sense were not a part of the

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movement of the Italian Renaissance. These principles did not belong to his time. This charge could be brought against many other great minds of this period.

His uncompromising severity is well illustrated by this story told of him. In one of his sermons, speaking of the corruption in the church, he said, "In the primitive church were chalices of wood and Prelates of gold; in these days, the church has golden chalices and wooden Prelates!" It was a most heroic thing to proclaim war heroically upon the vices of a vicious age, especially when these vices were incarnate in the rulers of church and state. But Savanarola feared neither Prince nor Pope and hurled his javelins of fierce denunciation, meaning to cut deep into the heart of sin and corruption.

It is one of the peculiarities of genius that it overreaches itself, that it has in it the spirit of prophecy and inspiration. When Savanarola told his people that he was "called of God," "That God had revealed his divine will to him," though using this rather ambiguous language, he

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recognized his purely human powers, and when not borne along by the passion of his feelings, took reasonable views of his work. But he had launched his bark upon a stream whose current he did not fully realize or fathom. At last, when he did realize it, it was too late, and in a moment of weakness, after long hesitation, he yielded to the satanic demands of his enemies and consented to pass through the "test of fire," and this moment marked his doom. We cannot assume positively what the result would have been had he never for one moment yielded his higher convictions to this demand; possibly the present result would have been the same, for the tide had set and could not be easily changed, but not so weakly superstitious would he have appeared upon the pages of history.

Savanarola believed with his whole soul in the work he had to do and the reforms he advocated; but there came a time, there was a point at which he became uncertain of himself. He did not lay claim to the power of performing miracles, but his great fault, even sin, lay

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in the fact that he did not from the first discourage the superstition that such miracles or evidence *might* be granted in confirmation of his power and doctrines.

Savanarola's character in its deep intensity and fierce power of denunciation is Dantesque. He belonged strictly to the church militant. He did not realize that virtue is of slow growth; he had not learned to wait. He planted his seed in the ground and then called upon the sun and rain to pour upon it, and all nature to hasten her operations, to bring forth the full grown tree and fruit at once. He was intensely practical and had magnificent executive abilities, but he lacked imagination and took little heed of individual rights and needs. Such impetuous men seem to be necessary in the development of truth and humanity, and they carry the torch of reformation into the very heart of complacent mediocrity. Such men are ever the pioneers of God's work in the world.

Savanarola's character stands for martyrdom to the higher law, because he would obey the voice of his own soul and

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conscience rather than the voice and authority of the Church. James Freeman Clark, speaking of Jean d'Arc and Savanarola, says, "Both were Lutherans before Luther and Protestants before Protestantism. Neither had any quarrel with the Church as such, both desired to be its faithful and obedient servants, both believed its doctrines and gladly received its sacraments, but each was compelled by the awful voice of conscience to refuse obedience to the *authority* of the Church."

Why Savanarola should have failed at last so utterly and completely longer to hold his power over the people of Florence is a difficult question to answer, perhaps impossible to answer. It cannot be found to rest alone on his puritanical, intolerant spirit, for severe as this was, he could melt the hearts of his listeners to the sweetest humility and bring tears to the eyes of the stoic and conviction to the cultured and philosophic. It cannot be found to rest alone on the character of the Florentines themselves. It cannot be proven that it was alone in the viciousness of the age; for vicious as it undoubtedly

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was, it had scarcely passed the meridian of a period whose glories in art, literature and social culture outrival all other historic periods; an age ushered in by the somber genius of Dante, followed by a long line of the brightest and greatest minds that ever challenged the admiration and reverence of a hero-worshipping world. Neither can it be found in any peculiar culmination of circumstances. Where, then, can we look for the cause of the dismal going out of this great luminary?

The one cause more than any other which contributed to this unhappy end was a failure on the part of Savonarola to cling unfalteringly to his highest ideal, to be absolutely true to *his innermost convictions*. He had become uncertain of himself, and as a last tremendous effort and struggle for supremacy, he weakly yielded to the insistence of his enemies and the urgent persuasion of his unwise and misguided friend, San Silvestro, and consented to that pitiful "test by fire." This moment marked his doom. There is strong evidence that he realized this and felt it most keenly. It was the vain cling-

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ing to a straw of one who knew he was drowning. The proof of this lies in the fact, first, from his association with his grandfather and his scientific and medical education, even slight as it was in those days, must have taught him something of the law of nature, and the relation of cause and effect. He must have learned that it is the nature and law of fire to burn; and that God does not interrupt the workings of his immutable laws. His study of physical sciences had doubtless taught him this much, hence his reluctance and hesitancy to undergo the test by fire. But he was still in the thralldom of superstition and bound by the chains of authority. Second, he did not lay claim to the performance of the miracles, or make many of the prophecies which his ardent friends claimed for him. His burning words, often spoken in metaphor, were exaggerated and distorted by the ignorant and over-zealous. Third, he did not use every effort from the *very first* to discourage the belief that he could perform such a miracle as the passing through fire unburned. Fourth, it was the fear of fail-

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ure and the almost certain knowledge that his power over the people was ebbing, and this knowledge, coupled with a certain stubbornness, inherent in his blood, which was exemplified again and again in many acts of his life, made him willing to grasp even this straw, in the hope of saving his power over the people whom he loved. It had in it a certain Machiavellian element which he often used in his relation with the Princes and Popes, to whom he was opposed. Fifth, he yielded his reason and will to superstition; he was not yet a free soul. The strongest proof of this lies in the fact that in the last sad moments of his life, when under the severest torture, when every other question was answered with clearness and precision, when his accusers came to the question of miracles and prophecies, his language *at once*, consciously or unconsciously, became dim, uncertain, ambiguous. Time and again the same questions were put to him with the same result. It was the last effort of a soul to be absolutely true to itself.

There was no hesitancy, no ambiguity, in Luther's answer to his tormentors at

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the Diet of Worms, "I can retract nothing, here I take my stand," and this spirit was repeated again by Ridley, Latimer and John Rogers at the stake and Robert Emmet on the scaffold.

It is one of the glories of our age that such a spectacle is well-nigh impossible as the "test by fire." Science forbids, common sense forbids. Something of its folly sank into the soul of the martyr, Savanarola, but he was not ready to burst the bonds that held him captive. But to him belong the honor and the glory of paving the way for those who came after him to live up to the light of freedom.



SHELLEY.

SHELLEY.

SHELLEY'S VIEWS OF NATURE; PARALLEL- ISM AND CONTRAST WITH OTHER POETS.

MOST modern poets have looked to Nature for inspiration, consolation, sympathy and perennial freshness, the sacred shrine whereon to lay the incense of each burning thought, or calm the troubled spirit. The unfathomable mystery of Nature's processes, the marvelous ebb and flow of the tides, the regularity of the returning seasons, the beauty of the sea and sky and flower, the harmony of revolving worlds, and systems of worlds, have ever kindled the imagination and excited the curiosity of the true poetic soul. In earlier times these phenomena only excited fancy, admiration, wonder, awe or fear. As knowledge and

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science advance, revealing with telescope and microscope myriad worlds in infinite space, the exquisite beauty hidden in the commonest weed, the wonderful relation of one form of development to another, the variety and beautiful interdependence of each to all and all to each, the admiration and wonder do not grow less, but the poetic imagination, guided by the revelations of Science, revels in truth and beauty, knowing for certainty that we may worship Nature, and through Nature, Nature's God. The poet sees something of that love and wisdom which is existent in and through all external phenomena, and being thus related to Nature becomes her reverent devotee and seeks through her laws to pierce the veil of the unknown and find a solution of those problems of Life, Death and Immortality which has been the craving of all high souls in all times. The poet's mind is filled with glorious visions of the Unseen, while his enraptured eyes behold with keenest joy the perfection and beauty around him. His poetry partakes of this knowledge and this ecstasy, and becomes

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through his genius a world poem, because it draws its sustenance from the infinite, and rests upon the highest canons of art, which demands some *Universal Truth* for its basis.

Shelley was a child of Nature and saw her with unfettered vision. Throwing off early in life the yoke of superstition, he came to her untrammelled and she yielded to him her rarest secrets. His soul, with all its surging, swaying passions struggling for expression, finds at all times sympathy, correspondence and inspiration in the changing moods and forms of the material universe.

Shelley has been truly called a poet of the Nineteenth Century, for in this marvelous youth, this radiant Apollo, we find the close observation and keen analysis of the scientist united with the fiery passion and clear insight of the poet and seer. In him were united in a rare degree the "Wisdom of Love, with the Love of Wisdom." I cannot forbear to mention the first quality of Shelley's poems, although the second is that to which this paper is properly assigned.

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The two great passions of his life, love of humanity and love of Nature, were so interwoven that it is difficult to consider them independently. For his views of Nature were so mingled with his views of human life, the Creator of the world, and its ultimate perfection, that all of these are embraced in his anthems of prophecy and rejoicing.

The first impression received in reading Shelley's poems from *Queen Mab* to *Prometheus Unbound* is his love of humanity. This was the fire that kindled each thought and lighted each glowing word. He anticipated the fever which has risen to white heat to-day, when the religion of humanity by whatsoever name called is the highest expression of Christliness, the undying principle of all religions or ethics and the chief hunger of all true souls. This love, coupled with a marvelous insight into the inevitable trend of human destiny upward and onward to a goal of final perfection, was not simply a hope, it was a sublime faith, based upon the recognition of the divine possibilities inherent in the nature of man. This

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largeness of vision and prophetic insight placed him far above and in advance of his own time, and accounts somewhat for the apparent contradictions and the misunderstandings of his work and genius.

The second quality in Shelley's poems is his adoring love of Nature, his perfect sympathy and oneness with Nature, and his scientific and speculative view, a view unknown and undreamed of by the ancient poets. Dowden, in speaking of *Queen Mab*, says: "Seldom before in English poetry had the unity of Nature and the universality of law, the idea of a Cosmos been expressed with more precision or more ardent conviction: seldom before in poetry had the vast and ceaseless flow of being, restless, yet subject to a constant law of evolution and development, been so vividly conceived."

Nature, or, as Shelley preferred to say, the Spirit of Nature acting necessarily, and at present producing indifferently good and evil, giving birth alike to the hero, the martyr, the bigot, the tyrant, poisonous serpent and innocent lamb, yet tends unconsciously upward to nobler de-

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velopments, purging itself of what is weak and base. Shelley's Spirit, which circles half-mournfully, half-exultantly above the ruins of the past, which rises on the wing and screams at sight of all oppression and frauds done under the sun in this our day, flies to the future and embraces it with lovers' joy. That his ideal of the future golden age may be smiled at by common sense as impracticable, need give us small offense. In following the sun, he loses his way in a radiant cloudland; yet still amid bright voluminous folds of error he is on the track of the sun.

Shelley's views of Nature were not alone the result of his poetic insight, but were based upon the substantial study of Philosophy and Science under such masters as Pliny the Elder, Bacon, Rousseau, Bailey, Locke, Hume and Newton. He was constantly searching for the "Manifestation of something beyond the present and tangible object." He pierced through things to their spiritual essence. In Nature there was no voice, however soft and low, that he did not hear, no shade of beauty that he did not perceive, no crash

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of thunder or roll of cataract that he did not revel in. He early recognized the relation of cause and effect, not revealed to him alone by an array of facts and figures of the calm, patient scientist, but blazing forth in flash of inspiration and revelation. For all art ends in Science and all poetry in a Philosophy. For Science and Philosophy do but translate into precise formulae the original conceptions which art and poetry render by imaginary figures. Michael Angelo and Raphael were followed by Galileo; after Shakespeare we had a school of naturalists leading up to Harvey; after Bacon, Descartes and Newton, and after Goethe, Darwin and Huxley and Spenser.

At the early age at which Shelley wrote *Queen Mab* we see this scientific and speculative thread running clearly and unmistakably through the poem. He says:

“Spirit of Nature! here
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy temple.

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Yet not the Lightest Leaf
That quivers in the passing breeze
Is less instinct with Thee.
Yet not the meanest worm
That lurks in groves, or fattens on the
 dead,
Less shares thy eternal breath."

In the exquisite little poem, "The Cloud," he says:

"I am the daughter of earth and water
And the nursling of the sky,
I pass through the pores of the ocean and
 shores,
I change: But I cannot die."

In these lines we see a recognition of the indestructibility of matter and of the law of transformation and organization ever going on around us, creating its miracles of beauty and life in infinite variety.

In the Prometheus Unbound, where we find the matchless songs over the glad day which is to be, the moon sings thus:

"Music is in the sea and air,
Mingled clouds soar here and there;

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Dark with the rain new buds are dream-
ing of,
'Tis Love-All Love."

And the Earth takes up the refrain and
answers:

"It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay
doth pass
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flow-
ers;"

And Demigorgon, answering Asia's
breathless questions, says:

"If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets—
But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is
Imageless;
For what would it avail to bid
Gaze
On the revolving world? What
To bid speak
Fate, time, occasion, chance
And change? To thee
All things are subject but
Eternal Love."

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Words could not better or more finely express the poet's reliance upon that love which is coexistent with law, or a more perfect recognition of the Divine and eternal.

He realized that man is a microcosm, a reflection of that power which holds the universe in harmony, and which he called the "Spirit of Nature," because he did not wish to limit or define the limitless and undefinable. None but the most reverent and humble spirits thus confess the limitations of the finite mind, and the impossibility of absolutely unclouded knowledge of the Infinite.

Goethe.

In Goethe's works we find a wonderful similarity of view of Nature, with the same love, sympathy and delight in studying her mysteries. Goethe says: "Life is not light, but refracted color." Here the thought is repeated in metaphor drawn from Goethe's study of color. The waterfall is a symbol of human endeavor, impetuous, never ending, destructive, yet in-

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spiring and creating force, and the rainbow is the divided ray of the intolerably keen white light of truth, as it is reflected in and overhangs the monuments of life. Shelley expresses exactly the same thought in a different image, where he says, in *Adonais*: "Life like a dome of many colored glass stains the white radiance of eternity." In the second part of *Faust* we find in one of the songs of the chorus of the maidens:

"Given again to the daylight are we
Persons, no more 'tis true
We feel it and know it.
But to Hades return we never!
Nature the ever living
Makes to us spirits
Validest claim, and we to her also."

Taylor says of these lines: "The twelve Maidens of the Chorus divide themselves into four groups, relinquish their human forms and enter into the being of trees, echos, brooks and vineyards. Goethe was so well satisfied with this disposition of an antique feature, for which there seems to be no place in the romantic world, that

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we can hardly be mistaken as to his design. The transfusion of Nature with a human sympathy belongs exclusively to modern literature."

It is not the dryad but the tree itself, not the creed but the spirit of the mountain which speaks to us now. We have lost the fascinating existence of ancient fable in their human forms, but Nature, then their lifeless dwelling, now breathes and throbs with more than their life, for we have clothed her in the garments of our own emotion and aspiration.

No fairy tale of nymph or dryad can compare in wonder with the transfiguration which the woods themselves reveal to us, in the ever-returning birth, death and resurrection of her changing forms. Again in the second part of Faust, Thales, the Greek philosopher and mathematician, who thought, more than three hundred years before Christ, that "All things were instinct with life," is made to say:

"Nature, the living current of her powers
was never bound to day and night
and hours:

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She makes each form by rules that never
fail,
And 'tis not force even on a mighty scale."

These lines express Goethe's scientific
creed. In 1831 Goethe said: "The older
I grow the more surely I rely on that law
by which the rose and the lily blossom."
But nowhere is Goethe's idea of Nature
so finely expressed as in the Proemium to
God and the World:

"What were the God, who sat outside to
scan
The spheres, that 'neath His circling fing-
ers ran?
God dwells within and moves the world
and moulds
Himself and Nature in one form enfolds.

* * * * *

Thus all that lives in Him and breathes
and is,
Shall ne'er His puissance, ne'er His spirit
miss."

Emerson.

Our own philosopher and poet, Emerson,
seems at times to touch the very

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spirit and pulse of Nature, and we feel her throbbing life in his epigrammatic lines. In Wood Notes he tells the story of evolution:

“To the open ear it sings
Sweet the genesis of things:
Of tendency through endless ages
Of Star-dust and star-pilgrimages,
Of rounded worlds, of space and time,
Of the old floods’ subsiding slime.
Of chemic matter, force and form,
Of poles and powers, cold, wet and warm,
The rushing metamorphosis
Dissolving all that fixture is.

* * * * *

For Nature beats in perfect tune,
And rounds with rhyme her every rume,
Whether she work in land or sea,
Or hide under ground her alchemy.
The wood is wiser far than thou,
The wood and wave each other know.
Not unrelated, unaffied,
But to each thought and thing allied,
Is perfect Nature’s every part,
Rooted in the mighty heart.”

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Browning.

Among our modern poets, none have sung the truth revealed by Science and the metaphysical and intimate relation of spirit and matter more splendidly than Robert Browning. It pervades all he says like a fine ethereal fire, whose glow lights up the dim regions of futurity and gives him those broad views of love and faith which are rooted deep in infinity. He too based his hopes of man's ultimate perfection and immortality on that law which holds the worlds in their orbits and tints the smallest flower. Browning was one who had with great care, deep thought and conscientious research, joined the ever enlarging ranks of those modern thinkers who are striving to bring harmony out of chaos, chaos caused by the rapid change in the last half century of old landmarks, old ideals. The influx of positive knowledge in place of authority and vulgar empiricism, and the persistent research into the causes of all phenomena, physical or spiritual, mark our era. Close upon the heels of this age of analysis will follow a

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still more glorious age of synthesis, whose dawn we already see creeping slowly over the horizon. In Paracelsus, Browning thus traces the law of evolution of progression:

“Hints and previsions of which faculties,
Are strewn confusedly everywhere about
The inferior natures, and all lead up
 higher,
All shape out dimly the superior race,
The heir of hopes too fair to turn out
 false,
And man appears at last. So far the seal
Is put on life; one stage of being complete,
One scheme wound up: and from the
 grand result
A supplementary reflux of light,
Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains
Each back step in the circle. Not alone
For their possessor dawn those qualities,
But the new glory mixes with the heaven
And earth; man, once descried, imprints
 forever
His presence on all lifeless things: the
 winds

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Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout,
A querulous mutter or a quick gay laugh,
Never a senseless gust now man is born."

In Asolando, Browning's last work, we find the ripened thought of his eighty years expressed in a short poem called "Reverie":

"I truly am, at last!
For a veil is rent between
Me and the truth which passed
Fitful, half guessed, half seen,
Grasped at—not gained, held fast.

I for my race and me
Shall apprehend life's Law:
In the legend of man shall see
Writ large what small I saw
In my life's tale,—both agree.

All is effect of cause:
As it would, has willed and done
Power: And my mind's applause
Goes, passing laws each one,
To Omnipotence, lord of laws.

I have Faith such end shall be:
From the first, Power was—I knew.

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Life has made clear to me
That, strive but for closer view,
Love were as plain to see.

As the record from youth to age
Of my own, the single soul,
So the world's wide Book: One page
Deciphered explains the whole
Of our common heritage."

Homer.

The limits of this paper will not admit of an exhaustive survey of the objective poets, of whom Homer is the ancient representative, as Shakespeare is the modern. The Greeks delighted in the sunny outward manifestation of Nature, not her mysterious depths. The special and distinctive office of the poet in ancient times was to give delight; to recount to eager listeners heroic, valorous deeds of godlike men.

Life was divided into good and evil without complexity; subjective musings were not dreamed of; controversies between Religion and Science were unknown; doubt had not been born in the

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Homeric time; the eternal "Why" had not entered the poet's thought to breed its legions of unanswerables. It was reflection that changed the spirit of freedom and simplicity of the Greeks. In Homer we are borne along as on a swift current by his matchless descriptions, splendid narration of events rapidly succeeding each other, by his characters, perfectly drawn and clearly defined, and through all a diversity and simplicity which has been the marvel and delight of ages. But though possessing vivid and boundless imagination, nowhere does he show any sign of that inward searching, that quest for the hidden meaning of things. Gladstone says of Homer:

"Of the impersonated unseen no poet has made such effective employment; of the unseen, except as connected with impersonation, he never, I think, makes use, unless on two occasions, once when the ships of the Phaiakes (Phi-a-kes) are swift as a wing or as a thought, and the other where he compares the agitated mind of Hera with the quickened intelli-

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gence of a man stimulated and informed by travel."

How different the modern poet; every line is an invocation to the unseen, every thought an interrogation, every sign an appeal for light. Yet the epic of the future will embody the grand onward march of progressive thought and life, and must find its final reconciliation in Law and Love.

Conclusion.

What was the spirit of Nature to which Shelley bowed his head with the reverence of an idolator? It was the great first cause which lies back of all phenomena, material and spiritual, which men have worshiped under different names and different forms since the world's relief from the barbarism of base fear, beginning with reverence for something above him, which in the evolution of thought finds its best expression in the reverence for one's self or the soul of man, as the highest creation, the divine and immortal.

He recognized that all beauty, all har-

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mony is the direct result of a cause indefinable, but a natural development and sequence, the secret of which he is ever striving to find.

A keen poetic insight which flashes forth in revelations of the future, whose reverberations will roll down the coming centuries to kindle to renewed activity men's thoughts and purposes and clarify the atmosphere of gross materiality.

Shelley's love of Nature was not alone sensuous, though his ear thrilled to every vibration of sound and his eye delighted in every tint of beauty. He found a partial answer at least to his questionings, and his aspirations.

His views of Nature, though alien to his own time, have been largely verified by modern Science. There was a quality in the man and his poems akin to Nature, vast, luminous, tremulous with light intangible, impalpable.

But his music is permanent, for he is allied to that small choir of choice spirits who are the harbingers of the perfectibility of the human race. In his own beautiful words we may say:

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“Mourn not for Adonais. Thou
Young Dawn,
Turn all thy dewes to splendor, for
From Thee
The spirit thou lamentest is
Not gone.
He is made one with Nature!
There is heard
His voice in all her music,
From the moan of thunder
To the song of the night’s sweet bird.
The splendors of the firmament
Of time
May be eclipsed, but are
Extinguished not:
Like stars to their appointed height
They climb,
And death is a low mist which
Cannot blot
The brightness it may veil when
Lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And Life and love contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live
there
And move like winds of light on dark and
stormy air.”

**THOUGHT, THE PARENT OF ORIG-
INALITY**

THOUGHT, THE PARENT OF ORIGINALITY.

EACH age must write its own books. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books."—Emerson.

He who accepts the theory, or truth, full-fledged, all worked out in detail, from the brain of another, loses very much, even though he may comprehend the thing perfectly and grasp it wholly. When man works out his own problems he puts into the old truth (for truth is never new) that which gives it fresh life and vigor. He reclothes it with that fine something which is a part of his own being. The truths underlying the Christian religion, and the Platonic philosophy, were before

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Christ or Plato; for truth, like law, was, is, and ever will be. But these minds, grasping the germinal truths, moulded them into form and gave them palpable existence. The glory of Jesus and Plato is the weaving of their spirit in and through these truths, making them luminous to the world. Just this touch of individuality is the secret of all creative work, and is what we call genius. The sculptor's ideal, the artist's spirit, the fires of divine revelation it is which makes marble speak, canvas glow, music thrill and poetry stir. The difference between artistic and inartistic work is the difference in individual power and insight. This it is which gives permanence and tenacity to all art creation and is seen in all effort from the simplest forms of material workmanship to man's highest conception of law and order in the universe of God. Genius is always accompanied by his twin brother—independent individuality—and these two are linked with a third—marvellous courage. The genius who announces absolute truth is usually fortified by a moral courage as wonderful as the crea-

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tive faculty itself. Genius is not given to all men, but to each is given a talent, and it is a sacred duty for each one to use this talent and to think and act for himself, for he is not an integral, but a part of the whole brotherhood of humanity, a link in the endless chain of being. Whether this thought be helpful and luminous to others, gathering its followers and lending its radiance, or remains within the quiet limits of one's own soul as guide and light, matters not; we have been true to ourselves and true to a great ethical principle. Anything short of this individual effort is either stolen, borrowed or imitated. A modern writer says: "The true original genius does not kick out of the traces of the universe, but heroically carries it forward; not imitating the old, but transforming into it the new, wherein lies just his originality."

St. Augustine says: "Christianity has existed since time or the world began. Christ's coming gave to the principles he advocated the name it now bears." To accept crystalized truth without knowing anything about the wonderful process of

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crystalization may be a mental pleasure, but is lacking in that keener, finer joy which one may experience who has himself traced each step in the crystalization. All may have a simple appreciation of the general phenomena of the sun, moon and stars, but how grand is the conception of the universe! Man should use his brain, chemicals, reason and analysis to disintegrate the atoms of truth or thought, and then build up for himself; then the final synthesis will have a fullness, a roundness, a clearness that stamps at once the original thinker from the mere imitator.

To arrive at the truth we should begin by slaying the dragons, the negatives, as they arise successively in the mind; when this labor has been accomplished, and there are no more dragons to slay, the mind will be filled with a radiant sunshine of affirmative. Then are we truly placed. Then have we truly found ourselves. If we leave the mind unsettled, chaotic, we not only destroy the pleasure an unwavering affirmative gives, but we destroy its efficacy as a guiding principle of life, which is the chief object of all truth or

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knowledge. The healthiest attitude of the mind is one of questioning. There are many questions which in their nature cannot be answered with entire satisfaction; these have been most truly named—the great “unknowables.” Here we reach our limitations, but until we have sounded with our plummet every question that arises for us, whether this plumb-line be long or short, it is our most sacred duty and blessed privilege to use it.

The perceptive genius, or man of talent, may be a brilliant, shining light, but he has no permanency, excepting as he becomes identified with some idea of another. He is the Prophet that bears the word to the people. Perception is often mistaken for creation. What we have an undoubted right to is this: We may see, and adore; and far better still if we catch something of the divine aspiration and fervor which has made this creation possible; if we be induced to “go and do likewise,” this art creation has spoken its best lesson to us. Inspiration to effort is the lesson all true art teaches. This is not a discouraging view; it simply recognizes individual limi-

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tations and capacities, and without such intelligent recognition no true work can be accomplished.

We may accept crystalizations of thought in the same spirit that we accept a work of plastic art. It is ours to emulate and enjoy, but if we receive from it only a passing gratification, which may be coldly intellectual or warmly sensuous, then that thought has not spoken its best word to us. What is the highest word spoken to us by all art products? It is this: If we are drawn towards the artist's ideal; if we apprehend the meaning and content of the work, and if we feel this so strongly that we shall turn from it with longing and desire to attain also to some ideal—not necessarily to this particular expression of an ideal, but to some one; if we are touched by the fires of the artist's aspiration, and desire to emulate his achievements, and are touched so sincerely, so fervently, deeply that we are induced to press forward with new energy, new zeal, new resolve, new activity into some field of labor peculiarly our own, then, and not until then, has this thought,

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or this art creation, spoken to us from its highest to our highest. What we may call the appreciative genius, while not the highest, differs greatly from the commonplace, and to these original genius owes much; it is to these that the seer-few speak. It is they who carry down the ages the word or work of the masters. "There are leaders and followers," and it is to this large class of appreciative "followers" that we owe tradition. Tradition is born of perception and appreciation, and to tradition we owe history. Genius alone could not make history, though it is the source of all history. There is a vast gulf between a man of talent and the commonplace; for the latter cannot even experience vicariously the inspiration, or aspiration, of another. These are unimaginative, sluggish, dull, unthinking; they are the "passive souls"—who dwell not even in the Inferno, but remain in Limbo, "who by not doing, not by doing, lost." All great minds have been free and original thinkers. All men who have given new impulses and movements to the world-spirit. "In the spiritual order, as in the

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physical, to live is to change; to cease to change is to cease to live." To verify this truth we have only to glance backward over the past and recall the noble Socrates of old, the patient Galileo, the mighty Luther, the steadfast Giordano Bruno, the belligerent Savanarola, and all the long line of martyrs that have yielded up their lives for their thought.

It is not strange that the world's Christs have been given supernatural births, for each has stood among the common masses of humanity around him, as solitary mountain upon a vast plain. So out of the general order of the universe do they seem, that in ignorance and superstition mankind has resorted to the supernatural to account for their existence, and these seers, conscious of the divinity of the truths they bear, accept metaphorically what is meant literally. This, acting upon the minds of their followers, coupled with the worship inherent in human nature, which rejoices in finding an incarnation of its ideals, clothes these saviors in garments woven wholly of the imagination, and their words, only dimly or partially

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understood, are given a meaning far different from that intended. When Christ said: "I and my Father are one," he did not mean it in the literal sense, but in the sense of the divinity of truth, in which all mankind are one with the Father, when they comprehend His Divine purpose and obey His Divine commands. After eighteen centuries of Christian precepts humanity has not yet risen even to the just conception of Christ's teachings, much less to living these truths. It has taken eighteen centuries for mankind to gather the kernel and spirit of Christ's teachings and to fully realize the one grand central truth He came to proclaim, namely, the Divine human and the human Divinity.

Why Christ, the child of simple, loving parents, born in quiet Nazareth town, should have seen, comprehended and solved the problems of life around Him, and given us those universal principles which hold the essence of ethical life for all time is an interesting question, and is not answered by any theory of immaculate conception or supernatural birth. Why He carried the world's sorrow and

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pathos in His heart, was bowed with the weight of its sin, yearned over it with a deep and tender love, and gladly yielded up His life for this love; why His brooding spirit should have seen, as no eye had ever before seen with such sun-lit clearness, such supernal wisdom, such radiant, far-reaching vision, must ever fill us with wonder and admiration. But this one truth is apparent in the life of Christ as of others. Had Christ followed the traditions of His race, had He walked in the familiar and beaten paths of His ancestors, had He been wedded to the forms and ceremonies of His people, or had yielded Himself unthinkingly to His environment, had not torn Himself away from the temptation to glide smoothly with the popular tide, He would never have so stirred the waters of life anew for mankind. Why Dante, "the articulate voice of ten silent centuries," should speak those clarion notes that still echo down the centuries and shall be heard through long ages to come; why this somber-visaged, far-seeing genius beheld the soul's journey and epitomized it in that match-

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less allegory where all, if they will but look, may see the reflex of themselves, is answered, partly at least, by the fact that he thought long and deeply, and independently upon the problems of life and death, sin and the judgment, and took no other man's view of life, political, social or moral.

To each individual is given some task to perform, some problem to solve, which, if he rightly and bravely enunciate, first making clear to his own mind, will leave the world brighter and better for his having been. The true attitude of mind, and the only one in which man can do noble and efficient work, is absolute freedom of thought. This is what our age persistently demands and what freedom means. It is what our age is working out in its practical and spiritual affairs, and is being demonstrated every day in intellectual, political and social life. This freedom of thought will not in the future, as it has so often in the past, mean banishment, revilement, martyrdom and death. True freedom will be tolerant, broad, all-embracing, all-benevolent, all-loving, dis-

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carding nothing in the past which has helped mankind in its progress, and hailing with outstretched arms all that is new, true and beautiful.

PRAYER

PRAYER.

"The self-same moment I could pray,
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea."

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

IT would seem strange to any truly thoughtful person that the question of the use and beauty of prayer should be a debatable subject, did we not remember the origin and low conception of prayer which obtained in the earlier ages, and which even to-day are not entirely eradicated from our religious life. The begging for some favor of the All-Wise Creator, some petty desire to be granted, some selfish wish to be fulfilled, seems to us a shocking conception of prayer. But there is a conception of prayer which makes it at once helpful, real and permanent.

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The necessity for prayer in the human soul in moments of its highest aspiration, deepest sorrow, or keenest ecstasy, is its own justification, and one proof that prayer will be satisfactorily answered, though by no means answered always as we, with our finite vision, would wish.

The materialistic school would banish prayer entirely or relegate it to a purely scientific field. They cannot deny the reflex action, but would not assign to it any higher possibilities. Reflex action is certainly one of the elements of true prayer, because any effort of the soul reaching forth in unselfish desire lifts it into a higher atmosphere, and this reflex action of the mind upon itself elevates and ennobles. But this is not all. We have learned that the Inferno is a state of mind; that Heaven is within us, and not without; and that prayer is an attitude of the soul, not a begging for some material blessing. Prayer, then, is an attitude of the soul. Let us remember this, and see if we may learn how it is possible to attain this attitude. One may also say that prayer is an attitude of the mind, for no

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soul groveling in low or sordid desires can be said to be prayerful, and because, in its reaching upwards to the source of all things it touches the Infinite. It gives breadth to character, because it embraces in its beautiful spirit all sweet human relations and experiences, and remains with the soul, as one of its eternal possessions. And it gives depth, because the awakened mind reaches into the very heart of the universe, seeking there the laws of its being.

Prayer follows the law of growth and development, as other attributes of the mind. If we use our reasoning faculties over a mathematical problem seriously, persistently, knowledge will shine in upon our understanding, and reveal to us the truth we seek, and this seeming miracle is repeated again and again in our experience. It is ever the same wonderful revelation, and the joy we feel when the light leaps up in our minds, like a flash of lightning, revealing the truth that was before hidden—this is of itself enough to teach us to have faith that every effort in the right direction will, sooner or later, be rewarded, as the solution of a mathe-

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matical problem is. If a muscle of our arm be weak and feeble, and we use it gently, quietly, continuously, obeying at the same time the laws of physical well being, growth, strength and use will come to the enfeebled member.

We have also a spiritual faculty of the mind. This spiritual faculty, if developed and rightly used, and in that mood which we call prayerful, meaning simply a reaching forth and upward to the source of all light, in an attitude of childlike receptivity and earnest effort, such prayer will be rewarded; by what laws we do not now know, but an answer will come, in the form of clearer insight, greater moral strength, heavenly comfort, and possible joy.

Prayer is the activity of the spiritual part of our nature, and is doubtless governed by fixed and immutable laws, just as the physical and mental nature of man are governed by such laws.

It matters little that we cannot define or prove the existence of the spiritual organs, which are co-related to this spiritual function. But we know, through the necessity in our own being and by faith, cor-

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roborated by the history of man's spiritual growth throughout the world, and in all ages, verified by observation and experience, that such organs and such functions must exist.

The need for prayer in the human soul is its own justification for being, and is common to the whole race of mankind, partaking in the lower phases of the nature of fear, begging and pleading, and in the higher of worship, praise and rejoicing.

The first requisite for a true attitude of prayer is to gird one's self with the "rush of humility," and an honest belief that we deserve the sufferings brought or inflicted upon us, and a determination not to shrink or run away from conflict, nor to be crushed by opposing forces; but a rational acceptance of consequences, and an earnest desire that through this lacerating strife wisdom and holiness shall become ours.

To receive true blessedness through prayer one must drink of the waters of Lethe, that Lethe "Whither to lave themselves the spirits go, whose blame hath been by penitence removed." And this is

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not the Lethe of the Hindoo Nirvana, but a continued and never-ending series of transmigrations from our lower selves to our higher selves, pressing on from height to height, until, having passed through the Inferno and Purgatorio, we reach the divine heights of Paradiso, where shine the white lights of serenity and peace. Here "the word becomes flesh" and the incarnation a reality.

To make this attitude of mind habitual, we should begin with the child at the tenderest age. Teach him to let the mind, in some quiet hour each day, return in upon itself, to become self-searching, to bring the mind to feel thankfulness for blessings received, sorrow for wrong-doing, and there rekindle the fires of aspiration. Let him be taught to carry all its conflicts, all its passions, all its hopes, to this internal subjective tribunal, this sacred altar, with fires ever burning ready for the sacrifice, the pleading and the praise. The sacrifice of all selfishness, the pleading for all good, the praise and thankfulness for all joy. We may, if we choose, teach the child to discard the material altar, built of wood

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and stone, or covered with cloth of gold, to which the ancients brought peace offerings of slaughtered goats and rams, of sweet herbs, and of those things most precious to them. Nor is it altars of polished wood, nor fine vestments, nor soothing music, nor æsthetic coloring, nor polished rhetoric, the heart, and that the true oil to keep the fires burning is the sacrifice of selfish desires and gross passions. Through this action will be developed a clearer consciousness of right and the ability to seize quickly the best and the true, which will in time become habitual, and finally there will grow up, in the expanding soul, that keener insight into what are the real and eternal verities, and a nearness to all that is most desirable and beautiful in life. And later will come that consciousness and knowledge of the divine purposes, and the close fellowship with God, which, in its final synthesis, is unity with God, and the recognition of the divinity and brotherhood of mankind. This preparation would afford an impregnable fortress against sin and temptation, because this habitual attitude of the mind

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would at once repel all sudden attacks of evil, which we have most cause to dread.

The good effect of a rational understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer is illustrated by a fact from life. Two little boys had a quarrel. Neither would acknowledge that he was in the wrong, nor would they speak to each other for many weeks. One little fellow told his mother, "I have not repeated the whole of the Lord's Prayer since my quarrel with G——. I did not and could not say 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' " But finally, when he had brought himself to say those lines feelingly and truly, he was the first to speak, and the breach was healed. Here was the prayer and here the answer to prayer; whether by reflex action, the interposition of Providence, or the action of the will alone, it matters little; the result was all that could be desired, and the activity of the child's spiritual nature strengthened his moral courage; and was a general uplifting of his whole nature towards the higher and better.

It is not enough that we cultivate the

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intellect alone, for we have abundant evidence that there may be the finest culture and a cold, hard, barren spiritual nature. The brilliant men and women of the Italian Renaissance furnish some of the most striking illustrations of this, and our nineteenth century renaissance resembles the spirit of that remarkable period. There is the same spirit of egoism, of worship of the antique, love of luxury, love of learning, and also love of display. These are all characteristic of both the past and present times. The cultivation of the intellect alone is often a mere delightful pastime, a mental and emotional excitement, which is purely æsthetic, and may be a most selfish act. We have learned that neither statuesque beauty nor cultivated intellect can take the place of that interior attitude of the mind which includes both the "good of the intellect" and that supreme beatitude of spirit which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, hopeth all things, endureth all things." But in our day there is an element which acts as a restraining power, even though unconsciously. We are direct heirs of those

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principles of Puritanism which made and molded our grandsires, and we cannot lightly throw off our birthright. There is with us a moral hurt for wrong-doing, an underlying protest from this puritanic spirit, like the still, small voice to those grand men who made the love and worship of God the first duty and pleasure of life.

Therefore, let us not discourage prayer, but rather cultivate this highest language of the soul, and strive to make the prayerful attitude habitual, an ever-present factor in our lives, as the rational man makes his reason the arbiter of all vexed questions. This will be an equipment with which to do glorious battle-work in the world. For, take life on whatever basis you may, there are stern, warlike elements in it which never will and never can be eliminated, and the success or failure of life will largely depend upon the choice of weapons he shall select with which to fight life's battles. And if we would keep in the tide that bears upon its bosom the grand movement of the world-spirit, we must seek to obtain and retain the prayerful attitude.

**NINETEENTH CENTURY CONCEPTION
OF HUMANITY**

NINETEENTH CENTURY CONCEPTION OF HUMANITY.

WHAT we may call the Historical Perspective is now the recognized necessity for the rational treatment of any subject. We cannot take one isolated fact, or person, or period, and draw our conclusions from these alone.

In considering the Nineteenth Century Conception of Humanity, it is necessary that we take the whole grand movement of mankind, the history of the human race, photograph it upon the mind in a complete picture, before we have even a right to form an opinion, or pass judgment upon it. To trace out in detail the relation of one event, or epoch, to another; to ascertain the cause, or causes, by which certain effects were produced would be too tremendous an undertaking for one essay. But we may indicate very briefly the line of march of the ideas which have cul-

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minated to-day in such a glorious conception of humanity; in what particulars it differs from other times, and wherein it is an advancement upon the past. This movement, which antedates history, will be found to preserve throughout cohesion and unity, despite all apparent changes and differences; that there is no such thing as hap-hazard work in the growth of man's moral perception, or the development of the moral idea. Looking down through this long historical perspective, we shall see the present in its true and proper proportions. The history of the growth of the moral idea is preserved and revealed to us by the patient researches of the archæologist, the persistent investigation of scientists, the untiring efforts of scholars and the true interpretations of mythology and history transmitted to us through art and song and story.

The Nineteenth Century idea of Humanity is best defined by the word "altruism," a word which is used to express the great humanitarian movement now sweeping over the world, and to which all classes of writers, thinkers and workers are bend-

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ing their best efforts. It expresses the highest conception of man's relation to man, and contains the basic principle of all the different activities for the amelioration of the race under the name of Social Science.

In the consideration of our subject we find it necessary, first, to learn as nearly as may be the origin of the idea of "altruism," or the feelings and principles which gave rise to it, following its growth down to the present time; second, to seek those causes which have been most potent in its development; third, wherein the Nineteenth Century Conception differs from that of other great historical periods, and wherein it is an advancement upon the past.

At the earliest period of time of which we have any historic record, the *family* was already in a somewhat advanced stage. We also find that the idea of the family and religious ideas have developed side by side. Indeed, society was at first dependent upon and governed by religious conceptions. The family life of the ancients developed around their domestic

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Gods, and finally the state itself was governed by this paternal idea. The earliest races of men could not grasp the idea of a Creator, beyond the father of the family, from whom they derived the spark of life. The tombs of their fathers were located near the house to give access for frequent worship. Their Gods therefore were ever present. Annual banquets or feasts were held in honor of these "manes," as they were called among the Greeks and Romans, meaning the spirits of their departed parents. Sacrifices were constantly offered for propitiation or protection. "Marriage among the Greeks and Romans was controlled by the same principle, the continuity of the family, survival, was the object of most jealous care, adultery was most impious because it might taint the very God-head, celibacy was forbidden, the women of the family were made subordinate. The rights of property were fixed exclusively in the head of the family, the right of succession and inheritance was controlled and almost every act of life was regulated by this system. Every house had its altar and its

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altar fire, renewed every year." But as population increased it became apparent that the family could not take in all individuals, so the tribe was formed, and afterwards the curia, city and state, but still controlled by the family idea. This paternal form of government was finally superseded by one based upon the idea of *contract*, where law and strict obedience to its commands ruled domestic as well as public life. This contract society was a necessity, as the boundaries of territory widened and population increased. But this form of government in its first conception and practice was fraught with extreme severity and harshness. The Roman state grew and flourished by the insistence upon one idea, the idea of holding together the people to fortify and enrich the patricians, and developed the idea of loyalty and obedience to the state in the highest degree. But this power, born of superior brute force, by territorial conquest and slavery, naturally became severe and oppressive. Unlimited power in the hands of king or ruler not only ignored the rights of the individual, but

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grew rapidly to absolute tyranny. The exacting demands of the state were reflected to the family, and bore with especial cruelty upon women and children. This movement was, however, an effort for justice, and finally brought about a conflict between the individual and the state which, growing slowly and with many modifications, has finally resulted in the conception of the freedom of the individual, where men rule themselves, and by protecting their own rights protect the rights of others. This idea of *obedience* permeated the religious life for many centuries, until its abuse resulted in the *Reformation*.

We cannot trace in detail the great epochs of history which have successively followed each other, or their influence as felt for a longer or shorter period of time, according to the truth which such epoch especially demonstrated.

We know something of the Greek, Persian, Egyptian, Roman, Indian, Jewish and Christian streams of civilization and their co-mingling in a thousand smaller streams until their waters have inundated

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nearly all periods of recorded time and all traces of man, but each had lifted human life and human endeavor upon a still higher plane. Though each stream will be found to contain much that is imperfect, it is man's work in the world to sift the real from the unreal, the true from the untrue, and leave for the next generation the largest kernel of absolute truth which we can find and preserve.

The same principle holds true of great minds as of great epochs. Ever and anon rises some master mind upon the horizon, as Socrates, Confucius, Buddah, Christ and a long line of Seers, Prophets, Saints and Martyrs, who give new impetus, new life and new energy to the growth of the moral idea. Doubtless there will ever arrive, as time and occasion are ripe for them, others bearing new messages to the world. Hence we find that no one mind holds within itself the totality of truth. These men and these world-historic epochs will be found to bear a direct relation to and interdependence upon each other, and form a chain of unity, whose links reach

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backward to the beginning of history and forward to the end of time.

The poetry of history is to follow the rhythmical movements of action and reaction of one civilization upon another, and to find their reconciliation in the knowledge that all are operating under eternal, unchanging and beneficent *law*.

Among the more immediate causes which have led up to the world-wide interest felt to-day in the betterment of mankind, none are more potent than the men whose fiery words brought about that stupendous movement—the French Revolution—and from which dates so much of the Nineteenth Century progress. Rousseau and his compatriots furnished largely the momentum which finds expression to-day in the many organizations for the freedom and comfort of the masses. Whatever may be said of these men and their measures, they created a new gospel, and inaugurated a new idea of political and social life, based upon *personal liberty*.

Strange as it may seem, we owe, in no small degree, to the Guillotine the princi-

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ple of freedom which we now enjoy. "The nature of the Revolution is not affected by the vices of the revolters; for this is purely a *moral force*."

Great epochs of this kind do not spring up Minerva-like in one day, but are the culmination of decades or centuries of slow growth in the direction of justice and mercy. When Russia freed her serfs and America emancipated her slaves, it was simply the bursting forth, volcano-like, of the hidden fires which had apparently slumbered for generations. It was the triumph of the moral idea over brute force.

What we have said in regard to especial epochs and especial individuals, namely, that they have a direct relation to each other and swell the sum total toward the moral idea, is also true of all systems and Utopias that have been the dream of philosopher, philanthropist or sage from Plato down. The many distinct movements which are presented to us to-day are really but parts of a grand whole and appeal to different minds through their very diversity. Tolstoi, in homespun clothes,

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making his own shoes, will appeal to many who would not be reached by Mill or Gunton. Others will build air castles with Bellamy who would not be touched by Browning or Emerson. Another will seek the philosophy of this new renaissance through Kant or Hegel.

The *poetic* mind seeks the meaning of this unrest, and the reconciliation through the genius of Dante, Shakespeare or Goethe. Many are striving to unravel the mysteries hidden in theosophy and psychology. Statesmen are seeking the betterment of man's condition through the revision of existing laws or the making of new ones. Each diverse opinion and activity has its leaders and followers. This is not detrimental, but, on the contrary, is productive of the highest good.

One of the most potent factors in this altruistic movement, and one that is peculiarly our own, is the revelations made by modern science, because science rests upon verifiable hypotheses. This does not imply that all truth is verifiable. But in the future the science of psychology will doubtless reveal many laws the governing

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spirit of which we know nothing of to-day. The researches of the Christian Scientists and Psychologists, though now in a dangerously crude state, are groping towards this end.

It is the *opposite* poles of the battery that bring forth the spark of light; so it is through the touch of *opposite* lines of thought that truth will flash forth. This will make us tolerant of all efforts and reveal to us the unity of all activities.

Our Nineteenth Century idea of humanity is a culmination of the moral idea which we inherit from the long past, and its growth has been in a continuous line of ascent. We also find it to be in the inherent nature of things that humanity should progress and not retrogress. If at times there has been a seeming stagnation, or even going backward, it has been a passing phase only, for human nature must, *sooner or later*, rise to the level of its source, which is the infinite.

In the development of man's triune nature, the moral is the last, as it is the highest and slowest to ripen to perfection. But it is an immense step gained from the first

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conception of duty in the heart of primitive man, engendered by purely selfish and egotistic motives of perpetuating himself through lineal descent, to the lofty ideals that prevail to-day, which include *all* humanity in its altruistic consciousness.

We now come to the important question—Wherein do our Nineteenth Century ideas differ from those of other great historic periods? We find the fundamental difference to lie in four essential points:

First, the idea of God, or the Creator of the universe.

Second, a truer conception of the rights of *others*.

Third, the quickened sense of personal responsibility.

Fourth, that this humanitarian movement is in favor of no special religious creed, or class of persons, or sex, but has for its object the rounded perfection of every individual, and the well-being and happiness of all sentient creatures.

First, primitive man, as we have seen, did not and could not have any conception of God or Deity such as we mean when using these words. This is also true of

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many savage tribes to-day. From the Ghosts of ancestors, revered and propitiated, up through all the various conceptions which have held sway over the minds of men from time to time, being now the worship of wooden images, now certain animals, now the forces of nature as revealed in the changing phenomena of storm and sunshine, day and night; now the worship of many Gods and now of one. These different ideas brought down to us through sacred and profane history, through the rise and fall of states and empires, through the birth and death of various civilizations, through all the beautiful mythological disguises, through all literature and art, until it is finally revealed to us in that marvelously beautiful declaration which says—“*God is love,*” and the highest service of the soul is—love to God and love to man; that this love and this service is not in asceticism, nor exclusion, but is active and inclusive.

Second, our conception of what is due to others is clearer and broader than ever before, and reaches deep enough and far enough to embrace an abstract idea of

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right. While it is true that history furnishes many illustrations of individual men and women who have sacrificed all for an abstract principle, as Socrates, Savanarola and Luther, *we* have risen to the conception of the principle of *universal* freedom.

Third, in no other age have the ideals of men and women attained to such heights of personal purity and personal responsibility. Never before have men realized the divine possibilities inherent in human nature, and never before have these possibilities been more ardently loved, more keenly felt, or more earnestly sought after.

Fourth, our civilization is built, *not* upon one single idea, but has grown from large conflicting parties in church and state. Not only in politics and religion do men differ, and labor for what they consider the right and true; but in nearly every private effort, or public organization, the rights of the individual are respected and private opinion tolerated. Thus one party acts as a corrective and restraining influence upon the other.

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The man or party who sees that regeneration of the race must come only from the betterment of man's physical environment, and would direct all his efforts towards regulating the hours of the workmen, or by giving them better homes, or better food; is balanced by the party who sees that man's spiritual and mental wants are often keener and more absolute than the physical. This diversity of opinion and effort will counteract the tendency to run to extremes and keep up the equilibrium. These different elements, particularly the altruistic, working side by side with our immense material prosperity, will make such a catastrophe as happened to Greece and Rome impossible.

It is apprehended by many that our splendid achievements in material prosperity, in mechanics, in science and the fine arts will deaden our aspiration for spiritual things. But when we consider the immense gain to the masses in physical comfort, in education, in leisure for culture, in general happiness, as compared with many epochs in the past, we shall see that the average of humanity is far

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happier, even if more discontented, and more ambitious than at any other time. This is more true of our own beloved country than elsewhere. Far better is it for a nation, as well as an individual, that it has the ferment in its blood of a holy discontent. Without this no growth to either is possible, and stagnation, disease and death must follow.

Another factor, and one destined to become of great importance in the future, is the superior education and position of women. When we remember that it is not so very long since women have been thought to be without *souls*.

The early church, with its magnificent structure of gorgeous forms and ceremonies, employed woman's fine emotions to keep alive her altar fires. Woman's devotional nature, her keen mental wants, and the finer passions of the heart have heretofore found in formal religious observances a large field of activity. But to-day woman is called to a higher consecration of her powers than embroidering altar cloths or priestly robes.

The exquisite angel-faced Madonnas

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“Wrought in a sad sincerity,” by the earnest passion of the artist souls of the past, and whose deification of motherhood has added not a little to the growth of the true worship of woman, would seem to be superseded to-day by the “Madonna of the tubs,” and a holy zeal to rescue forlorn and suffering women everywhere.

The gospel of the divinity of human nature comes with a new revelation, and a new hope, especially to woman. Woman now realizes that any violation of her nature, mental, moral or physical, is followed by the law of retribution, for *law* makes no sentimental discrimination in favor of her sex. This larger position of women carries with it an immense responsibility, and its force in our modern civilization is *incalculable*. Goethe, true seer and prophet that he was, realized what this influence was to be when he used those imperishable words—“It is the eternal womanly which is to draw us onward.”

The sacredness and the purity of the family is also being more and more considered and insisted upon. Despite the

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discussion of Mona Caird, E. Linn Linton and Grant Allen, despite decadents, ego-maniacs and degenerates, it is in all essential features an improvement upon what has gone before. Despite the question we so often hear, "Is marriage a failure?" and much we know to exist that is unhallowed, we feel sure the consensus of the Nineteenth Century will give a *ringing negative reply*.

The problems raised by Max Nordau, Benjamin Kid and others will eventually be answered to the benefit of coming generations.

Another important element is the fact that we do not hold the blessings of culture and education as an especial privilege of any one class or condition of people. We *do* recognize that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is the right of all mankind. Out of the conflict of diverse opinions we may confidently hope for the development of systems, educational and philanthropic, which will be particularly adapted to our present ideas and necessities. That we possess the freedom to discuss these questions without

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fear of torture or ostracism, and of demonstrating our theories and methods, is our especial privilege.

Again we find that a greater respect for life is a marked characteristic of this Century. Not alone human life, but life in all its manifold forms. This is well attested by the humane societies in all large cities. This is an effort to create finer sensibilities, especially in the young, towards all kinds of cruelty and suffering.

In man's growing sensitiveness to *pain*, we see one of the chief elements of true culture.

Through our larger international communication we are brought face to face with the sufferings by cold and hunger of the Irish Peasantry; we thrill with horror at the torture practised upon Russian prisoners; or we are torn with pity when we read of "Prisoners of poverty at home or abroad"; or, when reading "In Darkest England," we feel that life can hold nothing more of sweetness and light for us until those three million of souls are rescued from perishing in the sea of depravity and sin. Being thus forced to see

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and recognize these facts by the changed conditions, *externally*, we are driven by this knowledge, and the finer impulses from within, to make an effort for the relief of suffering humanity everywhere. Intellectual culture alone will not give us this delicate sensitiveness, for we read that the highly cultured Leo X. shot condemned criminals for *his own amusement* in the yard of the Vatican. "Only when intellect has been wedded to unselfish love the ideal man will have appeared."

The scientific probing knife of Dr. Nordau has revealed to us many of the causes of the mental, moral and physical diseases of our century. But even this all too pessimistic and fanatical writer has at the last this hopeful word to say of the future of mankind: "Humanity is not senile. It is still young, and a moment of over-exertion is not fatal to youth; it can recover itself. Humanity resembles a vast torrent of lava which rushes broad and deep from the crater of a volcano in constant activity. The outer crust cracks into cold, vitrified scoria, but under this

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the mass flows, rapidly and evenly, in living incandescence."

Our own philosopher, Emerson, says, "We think our civilization at its meridian, but we are only at the cock-crowing and the morning star."

The moral or altruistic sentiment has the force and persistency of eternal *law* in it. Blunted, disfigured, dragged through fire and blood, it survives all changes, all wars, all discussions. Whether we see this truth through the eyes of philosophers, who tell us that duty or the "moral imperative" lies inherent in the soul of man, or whether we believe with the scientists, that in the evolution of life it is impossible for wrong to triumph over right, that it is as necessary that the human soul should *ultimately* reach perfection as for bodies to follow the law of gravitation, we see that the moral idea is a positive entity, a real and active force in the universe. It has worked its way through immense resistance, resistance offered by ignorance and selfishness. But this principle, growing slowly, like the Alpine Glaciers, as it moves onward through

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human nature, changes the moral sentiments of humanity. The aggregate of the moral idea as it has accumulated from age to age is stupendous, and has the force and sanction of infinity.

Fortunately for us, that we have outgrown the morbid doctrine so thoroughly taught and insisted upon by the mediæval fathers, that our duty must be dolorous and one of rigid self-sacrifice. We have learned that "pagan self-assertion is one of the elements of true worth, as well as Christian self-denial." In the future all service of humanity will be a joy, free, spontaneous and bountiful, as the lover to his beloved, or the mother to her child.

Through all evolutionary developments, through all forms of religious worship, through all societary life, through all literatures and art, and all individual effort nothing has been lost, but all changes, whether volcanic or peaceful, have tended to the betterment of mankind. Every martyr that has died in the long past, by fire or sword, has added so much to the sum total of that "Spirit which makes for righteousness." The men and women who

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to-day are dying in Siberian exile will hasten the freedom of that great Empire. All altruistic activities now sweeping over the hearts of mankind but swell the aggregate of this regenerating spirit.

"One accent of the Holy Ghost

The heedless world hath never lost."

This is what the Nineteenth Century Conception of Humanity means, and what it is working out with quickened pulse and loving heart-beats.

Sophocles, speaking of his great predecessor in the tragic art, said, "Æschylus does what is right without knowing it." If this is true of genius, it is also true of the highest conception of humanitarian efforts. When it has become the daily habit of the soul, we shall do right without knowing it. Then will the powers of the earth and the human mind ally themselves with the powers of God and nature to bring about that "Kingdom on earth which is in Heaven."

"Then happiness will be at its maximum, and the soul-felt desires of millions of generations will be heard as prayers and answered as facts. Love is the high-

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est manifestation of mental life. The mind through all its developmental career has been reaching toward it and longing for it. The elemental form of love appears in every pleasure of every kind, but its highest manifestation is altruistic."

**AN INTERPRETATION OF EMERSON'S
"SPHINX"**

AN INTERPRETATION OF EMER-
SON'S "SPHINX."

The Poem.

THE Sphinx is drowsy,
Her wings are furled,
Her ear is heavy,
She broods on the world.—
"Who'll tell me my secret
The ages have kept?
I awaited the seer,
While they slumbered and slept;—

"The fate of the man-child;
The meaning of man;
Known fruit of the Unknown;
Dædalian plan;
Out of sleeping a waking,
Out of waking a sleep,
Life death overtaking,
Deep underneath deep.

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“Erect as a sunbeam
Upspringeth the palm;
The elephant browses
Undaunted and calm;
In beautiful motion
The thrush plies his wings;
Kind leaves of his covert!
Your silence he sings.

“The waves, unashamed,
In difference sweet,
Play glad with the breezes,
Old playfellows meet.
The journeying atoms,
Primordial wholes,
Firmly draw, firmly drive,
By their animate poles.

“Sea, earth, air, sound, silence,
Plant, quadruped, bird,
By one music enchanted,
One deity stirred,—
Each the other adorning,
Accompany still;
Night veileth the morning,
The vapor the hill.

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“The babe by its mother
Lies bathed in joy;
Glide its hours uncounted,—
The sun is its toy;
Shines the peace of all being,
Without cloud, in its eyes,
And the sum of the world
In soft miniature lies.

“But man crouches and blushes,
Absconds and conceals;
He creepeth and peepeth,
He palters and steals;
Infirm, melancholy,
Jealous glancing around,
An oaf, an accomplice,
He poisons the ground.”

Out spoke the great mother,
Beholding his fear;—
At the sound of her accents
Cold shuddered the sphere;—
“Who has drugged my boy’s cup?
Who has mixed my boy’s bread?
Who with sadness and madness
Has turned my child’s head?”

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I heard a poet answer
Aloud and cheerfully,
“Say on, sweet Sphinx! thy dirges
Are pleasant songs to me.
Deep love lieth under
These pictures of time;
They fade in the light of
Their meaning sublime.

“The fiend that man harries
Is love of the Best;
Yawns the pit of the Dragon,
Lit by rays from the Blest.
The Lethe of Nature
Can't trance him again,
Whose soul sees the Perfect,
Which his eyes seek in vain.

“To insight profounder
Man's spirit must dive;
His eye-rolling orbit
At no goal will arrive.
The heavens that now draw him
With sweetness untold,
Once found,—for new heavens
He spurneth the old.

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“Pride ruined the angels,
Their shame them restores;
And the joy that is sweetest
Lurks in stings of remorse.
Have I a lover
Who is noble and free,—
I would he were nobler
Than to love me.

“Eterne alternation
Now follows, now flies;
And under pain, pleasure,—
Under pleasure, pain lies.
Love works at the centre,
Heart-heaving alway;
Forth speed the strong pulses
To the borders of day.

“Dull Sphinx, Jove keep thy five wits:
Thy sight is growing blear;
Rue, myrrh, and cummin for the Sphinx,
Her muddy eyes to clear!”—
The old Sphinx bit her thick lip,—
Said, “Who taught thee me to name?”
I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow,
Of thine eye I am eyebeam.

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“Thou art the unanswered question;
Could'st see thy proper eye,
Always it asketh, asketh;
And each answer is a lie.
So take thy quest through nature,
It through thousand natures ply;
Ask on, thou clothed eternity;
Time is the false reply.”

Up rose the merry Sphinx,
And crouched no more in stone;
She melted into purple cloud,
She silvered in the moon;
She spired into a yellow flame;
She flowered in blossoms red;
She flowed into a foaming wave;
She stood Monadnoc's head.

Through a thousand voices
Spoke the universal dame:
“Who telleth one of my meanings,
Is master of all I am.”

The Interpretation.

The negative side of man's spirit as
represented by average humanity is dull,

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stupid and sleepy from ignorance. His "ear is heavy" and he "broods" because he cannot comprehend the mighty secrets of the external and internal world. He waits through the slow creeping ages for the revelation yet to be made by the Seer and the Poet. These questionings.

"The fate of the man-child;
The meaning of man;"

have puzzled and kept the minds of the thoughtful in unrest, in all ages of the world; and are, and ever will be, the deepest of all questions. The commandment "Know thyself" is God implanted, and has raged in the souls of men always, with more or less of divine fervor, and is being answered with greater clearness to-day than ever before. Life with its manifold activities man realizes is the outgrowth of some unseen force, the result is apparent, but the causes, and that which lies still farther back, the primal cause, he cannot see. Yet, by some strange, irresistible force, he is ever impelled to seek after the "unknown." The workings of the world are so mysterious, so intricate, so laby-

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rinthine, that to the "drowsy" passive ones it cannot but seem a "Dædalian plan," not only in the material universe, but still more so in the marvelous complexity of the human mind.

"Out of sleeping a waking,
Out of waking a sleep."

This is the wonderful resurrection psalm, sung through all nature and in the soul's immortality. Each death ushers in a new birth, the mysterious transformation and transfiguration, going on in all life, where "if we could watch with eyes all seeing, we should expect to watch those world-systems themselves coming and going, like the leaves upon our trees, like the human generations, systems evolving and dissolving in endless cycles of cosmic reproduction." Verily,

"Life death overtaking;
Deep underneath deep."

Out of decaying nature wake the springs of budding life, and in the sleep of the body which we call death, the waking into immortal life. Even this sleep of the body

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is only apparent, for when the spirit has fled, nature begins her work of resurrection at once, forming new combinations of gases and chemical compounds, out of which new births will arise.

In external nature, and in the lower forms of animal life, all is calm, peaceful and free. No unrest, no questioning of the why. The happy birds sing gaily, speaking for the voiceless, silent leaves, thus reciprocating their shelter and praising their beauty. Here all is joy and gladness living out a perfect existence, obedient to the laws which govern them, and all moving together harmoniously, the Supreme over all, and in all, and a beautiful interdependence, as

“By one music enchanted,
One deity stirred.”

“The journeying atoms,
Primordial wholes,
Firmly draw, firmly drive,
By their animate poles.”

Here is a recognition of nature's immutable laws revealed by modern science,

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where there is neither wavering nor vacillation. How articulate with power and meaning is the word "firmly!"

The new-born babe appears to us a direct revelation and gift from the Divine. Those calm, unfathomable depths in its eyes strongly suggest a past life—"The immortality that lies behind us." But here is the potential man, here

"The sum of the world
In soft miniature lies."

Nothing could exceed the beauty of this expression, and the possibility it foreshadows of man's high destiny.

Man, by his pettiness, selfishness and passions, grows weak and infirm. The world is not dismal, nor sad, nor melancholy, if he fills it with purpose, and is gifted with wisdom and faith. It is not God, not nature, that has "poisoned the ground," but man's own acts, the result of his perverted will.

The "great mother," speaking for all mothers, in that agonized cry which is wrung from the torn heart, when the eyes of her boy have lost "the peace of all

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being," and whose character has been destroyed by a life of sin and folly, gives us in epitome the pathos of maternal love and care. But the poet, if he be a true poet, is seer and prophet, and can be cheerful, even joyous, because he sees that

"Deep love lieth under"

all these dark and despairing circumstances. He reaches out and beyond the present and the particular up to the universal, and there reads in golden letters

"The meaning sublime."

But man is not content to sit idle, or drink of the waters of Lethe, because—

"The fiend that man harries"

is aspiration, which will never let him sleep. It goads and pricks him on, keeping him forever in search of the highest, the "best." The "pit of the Dragon," which symbolizes the negative side of man's nature, is ever open, yawning, ready to engulf the weak, faint-hearted, passive souls "Who by not doing, not by

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doing, lost." But even this dismal pit is illumined "by rays from the Blest." These rays were intended primarily to make the pit visible, but they will light the way for him who will rise to the task of searching, thinking and acting for himself. Man is given free-will, and the power to choose, and if he desire not to fall into "the pit of the Dragon," let him become self-remedial, and a free soul, through renunciation and reconciliation.

There is no rest in the finite for one whose soul is once filled with the ideal, the perfect. He may not be able to realize this ideal, it may not be perceptible to the senses, but he knows its verity, its truth. This is to him the supreme good. Man must look beyond the present and his environment, else he will be blind to what are the true and the beautiful.

"To insight profounder
Man's spirit must dive"

if he would receive an answer to his aspirations. But having found the heaven of his desires he will not be contented to soar no more, but will press forward seek-

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ing "new heavens" to explore. Thus the spirit of activity, which is the world-spirit, is kept alive and forever moving.

Out of evil there will come good. Pride will cure pride, by bringing shame, which will restore. Sin will react upon the sinner, and work redemption. The dual nature of man makes all the fluctuations in human life, "The eterne alternation." Pain is born of pleasure in excess, and pleasure of pain, in the light which brings wisdom and grace. Pain is the "blessed Angel," and brings "the peace that passeth understanding" upon her wings. But through all the conflicts,

"Love works at the centre"

and will bring about the final reconciliation.

"Have I a lover
Who is noble and free?—
I would he were nobler
Than to love me."

Here the poet rises beyond the beatitude of "Love's young dream," beyond all

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present finite joy, and points to a love centered in the ideal, the eternal.

The "dull Sphinx" mirrors man's own stupidity. Finitude blinds his eyes. She is indeed and in truth his "spirit, yoke-fellow." Man here sees the reflex of himself. He is the unanswerable question, the riddle of all time. If we would solve the problems of life, we must seek to learn the laws which govern life, because law is the most direct revelation from the Divine. Here the Poet has given us the key which unlocks the secrets of the universe. Man is clothed with immortality, therefore, the finite, the present and the individual will not give us the true answer, and is a "lie," and the present time, which is limited, must of necessity be a "false reply." We must pierce even into eternity, with the spirit's eye, for the solution of the deep and holy mystery of life.

Why should the Sphinx be "merry"? Because she has at last caught a glimpse of her true self. Man is now revealed, has become self-conscious. He will "crouch" no more, but will rise to his full stature, the glorious heights of the recog-

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inition of his infinitude and immortality. He has now found freedom through his "profounder" insight. This is the supreme beatitude. This is the joy that saints and martyrs have striven to express, when yielding up all, even life, for truth's sake. This the poets have essayed to express, from the beginning of the world. This is the ecstasy, this the true elixir of life.

The creative force, the "universal dame," speaks through all life and moves as truly in the infusorial animacula as in the solar system, or the soul of man. When man recognizes this truth and his unity with God, then he is "Master of all I am," and the "drowsy" Sphinx will unfurl her wings, and never again will she "brood on the world."

The poem could not have been written by one who was not in full sympathy with the scientific as well as the spiritual movement of our age. With a poet's fine ear he hears the deep questionings which are borne on every breeze, and with a poet's clear vision he sees the spiritual facts underlying all phenomena: "Prove them

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facts? That they o'er-pass my power of proving, proves them such."

The poem is pitched in the highest key. It is marvelously concrete, considering its scope. Its phraseology is marked and peculiar and abstruse until one has found the keynote, then it unfolds in wonderful perfection and beauty. It mirrors the subjective and objective world. We feel the rhythmical movement of Cosmos in it. It grasps the macrocosm and microcosm, and we may, if we listen well, hear the harmony of the spheres in their eternal progress. To appreciate it, one must have an ear finely attuned to the world's harmonies and a mind kindled by imagination. He must be able to grasp the totality of life and carry it in his soul, as one grand, illuminated picture; then the "Sphinx" will whisper her secret to him.

The poem naturally divides itself into five parts. The first, limiting itself to the first two verses, gives us the superficial view of life, and must of necessity, from its superficiality, be pessimistic; we cannot catch even a glimpse of the finality. But this is only the genesis of the poem;

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it will grow out of this gloom, as it develops.

The second part reveals the marvelous harmony, beauty and gladness of the material world and of animal life.

In the third part, in wonderful condensity is shown the negative, or ugly, side of man's nature. So cutting and strong is the description that one shrinks from it as from a blow. We feel the old Hebraic scorn of the flesh: verily, we are "worms of the dust," groveling, and "poisoning" the ground. But the symphony now arises in cheerfulness, steady, strong, assured. Under the dirges which the Sphinx sings, we hear soft strains of spirit-music of love and harmony, which are finally to reveal to us the meaning of this discord. Primarily, this discord lies deep in the nature of man, his aspiration striving against his limitations. This begets conflict, until finally,

"His soul sees the perfect,
Which his eyes seek in vain."

Now the symphony passes to the oratorio and becomes recitative, explanatory with

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the *adagio-con-gravita* movement, giving us clear reasoning, and answering our persistent why.

In the fourth movement, we are thrilled by a grand song of triumph in *crescendo-al-fortissimo*, announcing that "Thou art the unanswered question." Thou art the "clothed eternity;" Thou art the immortal one. Humanity here rises to the level of its source, and the idea of the Divine-human leads naturally and logically to the idea of immortality. This is the synthesis of evolution and of thought.

In the fifth and final movement, the orchestra bursts forth in a *Giulivissimo* song of free, joyous rapture, man finds his apotheosis, and is

"Master of all I am."

**WOMAN'S WORK IN THE NINE-
TEENTH CENTURY**

WOMAN'S WORK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

PART I.

The General Outlook.

WE hear on every hand the cry, this is the age of invention, of the purely practical, when science and mechanics are revolutionizing the methods of man's labor to wrest from the productive earth the comforts and necessities of life with the least possible outlay of vital force. Simultaneously we hear the cry, this is the age of materialism, agnosticism, unrest, spiritual heresy and infidelity; the age of social upheavals, of the shattering of old ideals, the destruction of old landmarks, old idols, and the disintegration of family life. This is an age when the state and the nation are as unstable as the individual. The monarch sleeps uneasily, fearing the assassin's knife. Nihilists and anarchists

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with brain and bomb are striving to break down all institutions, religious, social and political. But, side by side with telegraph and railroad, has grown a broader idea of man's true relation to man; a larger knowledge of the rich resources of the world, a consciousness of wonderful achievements in art, science and literature, and a spirit of noble emulation, which promises splendid results in the future. Keeping pace with the stealthy movements of the social revolutionists has been a steady vein of growth and thought looking to a higher, purer state of well being, not only for the few, but for the great mass of mankind. If we read of numerous divorces, with all the slime and filth there revealed, indicating the disintegration of family life, do we remember that upon the opposite page may be written the lives of men and women, whose fidelity to all the sacred relations of life are unparalleled in history or song. Evil appalls a community and crime is published broadcast, but virtue, being more normal, seldom awakens comment.

With the current of doubt and unbelief

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which threatens to inundate this fair age like the waters of the Nile over the Egyptian sands, runs another current, strong, pure and crystal-clear, acknowledging infinite wisdom and recognizing the sun-like truths of justice, mercy and freedom. In no age of the world have the ideals of men and women attained to such sublime heights of personal purity and personal responsibility. Never before have men realized the divine possibilities inherent in human nature, and never before have these ideals and these possibilities been more keenly felt, more ardently loved and more earnestly sought after. Man is learning to analyze, but not wholly to destroy, to build anew out of the old. Science is not all analysis, nor art all synthesis, for science builds up as well as tears down, and art discriminates, and dissects, and gives us in the higher forms only concrete truths.

There is a subject which lies at the center of life and well being, which on the one hand is related to all that life means of peace and holiness, and, on the other hand, is the source of degradation, sin and

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discord. But neither school of scientists has given exhaustive attention to it; Historians only touch upon it, Philosophers merely glance at it, Poets have sung only of its sunny side, and Reformers have generally "made the darkness more visible." I mean the social and domestic life of men and women. If my pen could adequately portray this antithesis, could paint the glory of the one and the horrors of the other, no further argument would be necessary to arouse mankind to give to this subject that close study which is now being given to kindred subjects.

In all ages of the world men and women have "heard the voice of God" calling them to a consecration of their powers to the services of mankind. To-day the word is spoken emphatically to woman. The perfect type of domestic felicity can scarcely be found, yet does not each untainted soul hold in its innermost recess a sacred ideal of this relation? The possession of this ideal is one proof of its possible fulfillment. If we can build up a social structure so that the whole fabric stands complete in its unity and perfec-

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tion, and prove its logical and spiritual reasons for being, we shall give to the world an ideal which shall be to the soul of man as lasting an inspiration as the Athenian Parthenon has been to the highest art feeling for centuries.

Our subject lies at the root of civilization, and to evolutionary development and immutable law, in so far as it has yet been revealed to man, we must look for light in the solution of our problem: First: What are the laws governing mind and body? Second: To what extent does one modify and control the other? Third: When conflict arises, which is inevitable from the imperfection of all finite relations, shall expediency and emotion decide, or abstract principle? Fourth: To what extent should the fact of parentage influence us in decisions touching this question? Fifth: What are the laws governing social development? Sixth: What are the laws governing individual development? Seventh: What is the relation of the individual to others, or the general good? Eighth: Woman's influence and her especial duty to-day?

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First. The law of soul and body. Man's threefold nature, instead of antagonizing, should be one expression of a perfect whole. Man cannot live in his animal state alone, neither can he live alone in the intellectual; neither in the spiritual. The animality of the savage represents the first; the cold devotee of learning the second, and the pale, unnatural ascetic the third. Neither of these gives us the type of a perfect rounded manhood. This triune nature, and how to harmonize and unify it, and thereby make man free, has puzzled even the wise. No faculty is given us for neglect, but for use and beauty. History bears out the truth of this, for when development takes on a purely one-sided form, nature revenges herself by sweeping over to the opposite side, as is illustrated by the violent recalcitration from corruption and folly, to cruel austerity and severity. From unquestioning obedience to authority and superstition to heresy and fanaticism. This brings about, approximately, an equilibrium and keeps up that ponderous movement which we call history.

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Second. When conflict arises, principle and not expediency and feeling must ever determine. Third. The fact of parentage is, or should be, an eternal bond. The living soul evolved from out the creative forces in the universe, holding those two wills responsible for its being, is the weaving of a chain whose growing links stretch far into eternity. The soul created to-day creates in the fulness of time other souls, who perpetuate good or evil. Fourth. In the early development of races the animal propensities predominate, for the perpetuation of the race and give us titanic types of men and women. Thus the gluttonous, drinking early Saxon and Norman has had as necessary place in the world as the Hindoo ascetic. Each epoch stands for some truth which remains a guiding principle for decades or centuries, until a new movement arises, and all things are changed. Thus each period becomes world-historic. It is the chief work of mankind from age to age to seek out, keep alive and perpetuate these truths. This is God's work in and through man. At some periods the tide of civilization

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reaches higher and makes a larger, grander sweep than at others, and in such proportion will that influence be felt for a longer or shorter period of time. How deep and long is the Hebraic stream. How full of beauty and perfection the Greek. How broad, prophetic and spirit-freeing the Christian. All ethics must be judged by the light of the age in which such ethics were the highest conception of human thought and action, for only so can we form a just estimate of the value of any particular time. In this way only can we get a proper perspective by which to form our opinion of the present, as well as the past.

Sixth. On the laws governing individual development, John Stewart Mill says: "No one can be a great thinker who does not recognize that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusion it may lead," and again, "In proportion to the development of his individuality, each person is more valuable to himself and is therefore more valuable to others. There is a greater fullness of life about his own existence, and where

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there is more life in the units there is more life in the mass which is composed of them." The keynote of all reform is the perfection of individual character. Each human being must in and of himself, and out of such conditions and environments as may surround him, and out of such material as hourly presents itself, work out the problems which life brings to him. This is the source of all character moulding. Goethe says, "Let a man learn, we say, to figure himself without permanent relation; let him seek consistency and sequences not in circumstances, but in himself; there will he find it; there let him cherish and nourish it." A recent writer says, "Freedom for development and application of pure moral impulse is now the hunger of humanity; mutual coercion and suppression of this impulse is its crime." When conflict arises between the individual and the rights of others, "The less must be sacrificed to the greater," the individual to the state, the state to the nation. Socrates gave his life to the state, to which he owed allegiance, because he had disregarded the laws of the state; he

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could pay this deference to its requirements, because it did no injury to his conscience. But his opinion and reason he would not yield; he was true to the voice of God in his own soul. In the beautiful story of Agamemnon's daughter, Epigения, this truth is given us in mythological guise, and in reading mythology we must remember that "Pagan self-assertion is one of the elements of human worth, as well as Christian self-denial." There is no real antagonism between the right to individual development and the duty to mankind. Out of the perfection of the individual will grow the perfection of the race; in proportion to the perfection of the units will be the perfection of the whole.

PART II.

For what shall woman stand in this civilization? What shall she do to assist in solving the great social problems of the day? As we glance backward over the mighty past, and hopefully toward the future, may we not take a comprehensive view and evolve from out the truths of

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religion, mythology, history, science and social and political economy a code of ethics that shall be as a beacon light to the coming generation?

The social organization is composed of two separate individualities, man and woman. For the harmonious development of the whole race each should be cultivated to the fullest extent of their capabilities, yet each may grow after the manner of its needs and in no way interfere with the free, healthful growth of the other. To make the perfect tree, the trunk follows the law of its nature, the leaves know their own needs and the roots reaching down into the cool, damp ground find there what they require for sustenance. Each member follows the law of its own being, yet all grow together to form the perfect whole. One imperfect member destroys the beauty and symmetry of the tree. Thus it is in the social body; free play must be allowed to all the faculties of the two members, and freedom to do this carries with it an immense responsibility, which must be considered.

In all the higher forms of civilization

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woman has been recognized, to some extent, as the equal of man. "Far back in the days of the Vedas of India, and many centuries later, when the great Buddhist hopes were built, there we find from the poetry of the former and the bas-reliefs of the latter women mixed freely and unveiled at feasts and sacrifices, and the two great Sanscrit epics, the Manhabahharata and the Ramayana, with some of the later tragedies, turn on chivalrous stories wherein women played noble parts and were nobly beloved." The Homeric age gives us such noble examples of womanhood as Penelope and Andromache. The heroic age of woman among the Britons was the age to which Boadicea belonged. So in the Periclean age exceptional women discussed grave questions with wise and great men. Sophocles and Euripides writing in classic Athens give us such glorious types of womanhood as Alcestis and Antigone. The heroism of the Roman matron is a matter of history. Aggripina, wife of Germanicus, lives beside her husband, and Cloelia's brave effort for home and freedom reads like a tale from

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the Arabian Nights. The Jews had their Miriam and Deborah, and a woman, Huldah, was intrusted with the key to the "Holy of Holies." Italy gives us such matchless women as Vittoria Colonna and Margaret of Navara. Our own time furnishes numberless instances of personal valor, strength, purity and achievement. So all down through the stream of history, individual women have risen who quickened the development and helped to ripen and perpetuate the truth for which their especial epochs stand. But these are exceptional cases. The feeling of the great mass of mankind is doubtless more nearly voiced by Dean Swift, who, when giving an account of a disaster, summarized it by saying: "Two thousand souls lost and several women and children." Our complacency and pride in our Nineteenth Century civilization is shocked when we read in the papers such items as this: "There are in India four hundred thousand widows under eighteen years of age. *One-fifth of these are under nine years of age.* The former barbarous custom of burning these poor girl-widows has been abolished.

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But the inhuman and unnatural custom of perpetual widowhood still holds sway." Bound in the unyielding chains of ignorance are those bodies and souls. Again we see the trail of superstition in the old idea that "The Priest shall make atonement for you," but you as an individual may not enter the "Holy of Holies." Was not the cry of the Israelites in the Psalm, "My soul thirsteth for God, when shall I come and appear before the face of God," a cry of the heart to reach forth and clasp the hand of the eternal, at any time or place, when the soul's needs were felt most keenly. Woman must learn to think and act for herself, and lean on none save God only. It is not so much what we believe as what we do. To be, and not to seem to be, is the keynote to all true character growth. Let the severity which has characterized woman's obedience to authority in the past stand as a type of the severity with which, as a rational human being, she will hold herself responsible for all inward thought or outward act. The church has ever employed woman's fine emotions to keep alive her altar fires. Her

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devotional nature, her keen mental wants, and the finer passions of the heart have heretofore found in religious observances a large field of activity. But to-day women are called to a higher consecration of their powers than embroidering altar cloths and priestly robes. Yet let us never forget what the Church has done for the conservation of art and literature, and that all this has meant and still means spiritual and mental growth.

The true conception of woman's work in the world, her duties, privileges and responsibilities, is yet to be conceived in the brain of some seer, to be given to the world by some noble teacher, and finally to be lived and proved by generations, before it can become a vitalizing, regenerating power. While a few minds have recognized this truth, and a few women have distinguished themselves sufficiently to keep the truth alive, this is only the historical few, the "Saving Remnant." The most of womankind do not fully realize their powers or responsibilities. But whenever the ideals, the leading minds of a nation are lofty, the masses will strive

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toward these ideals. If a few women, rarely gifted, rarely endowed with moral courage, and a philanthropic spirit, will point the way, time will bring out the final redemption. Woman must learn that any violation of her nature, mental, moral or physical, is followed by retribution, for law makes no sentimental discrimination in favor of her sex. Law does not even take account of motives, be that motive ever so high or holy.

It is unnecessary to discuss the equality or inequality of men and women. John Stewart Mill says: "When Christ wrought out for woman not a social identity, but a social equality, not a rivalry with the functions of men, but an elevation of her own functions, as high as his, it made the world and human life in this respect also a true image of God." It is often said with biting sarcasm that women have never written great histories, never written a great epic poem, never accomplished a great work of art, never discovered anything new in science, never invented machinery, never proved themselves astute or gifted in statesmanship. All these accusations

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are but partly true and have many exceptions. But let us remember they were the *mothers* of those accredited with all these great achievements. We cannot say that woman will do her best work in the direction of science, art or literature; time, the revealer of all truth, will demonstrate this upon the future pages of history. But the same causes which have operated against woman's advancement or achievement in the past do not exist to-day. There are few fields of activity wherein she may not spread her wings and soar as high as her capacity will admit. There are remaining few causes for complaint. She has only to prove her fitness and worthiness to receive in nearly all departments of life full recognition and appreciation. The few barriers which now restrict her activities will doubtless soon be removed. But we must be patient as well as persistent, for nature has given us no universal panacea warranted to cure quickly or suddenly our ills, whether they be physical or social. Let woman use her superior advantage, her more carefully trained emotions, her better disciplined mind, to bear upon those

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problems, which by their nature lie nearer to her than to man. Let her give long, patient thought to the search after those laws which govern the spiritual, social and domestic world. Here is the center of her work, fixed by the immutable laws of her being. Whatever of light and blessing it is given her to shed upon the world, its purest rays must radiate from this central sun. This is in the most direct line of her life, and she cannot escape the responsibilities if she would. The very generic difference from man may be a divinely appointed means by which she may arrive at a true conception of this most complex question. This is the "eternal womanly" which is to "draw us onward." To these problems let her give her best endeavors, her utmost efforts and the consecration of a life, if necessary. Mothers may emulate the historic and mythic sacrifices of the Greek and Roman fathers, not as Ephigenia or Virginia; but daughters may be taught to sacrifice enervating luxury, ease or even comfort, rather than sell themselves for pleasure, place or power. Women should not shrink from the cares of

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maternity, but bring a greater consecration to it. All reform is effective in proportion to the amount of enthusiasm, love and consecration we take to it. All the knowledge, refinement, education, wisdom and grace will find a fitting niche in the receptive mind of the young. If mothers seek to be companions to their children, then each day will be a beautiful idyl, where wit, wisdom, beauty and love shall make the poem complete. In this way only can perfect unity exist between parent and child. Woman must stand first and last, striving always to retain under all circumstances her perfect equipoise, and ceaselessly labor for a perfect individuality, strong yet flexible.

She must stand for absolute sincerity, absolute purity, absolute integrity; recognizing her responsibility and rising to a consciousness of the sacredness and beauty of her functions, her duties, which are as limitless as the universe and as vast as humanity. She must see the trend of events and have some voice in shaping their course. The gospel of the divinity in human nature comes with a new revela-

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tion, a new hope and a new aim. How could woman work, with care, and joy, when she believed herself to be without a soul? Women should stand as one for absolute fidelity to the ideal marriage, never debasing it for any reason whatsoever, and never assuming the relation for any reason excepting the highest, which is love. No more should we seek marriage, for any other reason than the highest, than we should seek God for any but the highest motive, which is love. To seek God for fear, for hope of gain or reward, is to the enlightened conscience blasphemous. Equally so should it be to seek marriage, which is the highest symbol of our unity with the Creator, and was often so used by the Nazarene teacher. Absolute personal purity has never attained universality, though the ideal has been accepted and realized in many individual lives, thus keeping alive the spark which shall kindle to purify the whole human family. A Utopian dream, perhaps, but not impossible. The Vestal virgins of Rome furnished an example of generations of chaste women, for it is recorded

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that in one thousand years only eighteen cases of unchastity occurred. This can be made possible only by the slow process of a proper education of the young, in the principle underlying their nature, emphasized in the family and insisted upon by the state. The time is full ripe for noble work to be done. A glance at the family life in our large cities, the abnormal life of most of our young women, and the corrupt lives of young men, show a tendency to drift into a vortex of immorality. Much of this tendency is due to the change and unrest of the age, and the great prosperity and rapid growth of a new country, two causes most fruitful of evil, unless a counter current shall set in which will purify the stream and modify its course. Eventually, in the pendulous movement of the world's growth, the needle of the compass will point to the marriage of one man with one woman, or a pure single life.

The dawn of this coming era began far back in the ages, antedating Christianity, where the Hindoo poet, with divine insight, speaks from the voice of the Indian Maiden, Savitri, these beautiful

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words, when asked to choose a lover the second time: "Once falls a heritage, once a maiden yields her maidenhood, once doth a father say choose, I abide thy choice. These three things done are done forever. Be my prince to live a year, or many years; be he as great as Norada hath said, or less than this, once I have chosen him, I choose not twice." Let this truth, having traveled down the centuries, become crystalized in the most gracious age. Let the dawn brighten into day, and in the splendor of this principle the high thought of the Oriental poet shall clasp hands with the best modern thought, forming a circle which sooner or later will embrace the whole world.

But we must not forget that much of the greatest of the world's work has been done in solitude and celibacy, and that character can be, and is, developed into rounded perfection outside of this relation. Here the law of conservation of force applies, as elsewhere. This converging of many rays of light in this century promises a solution to many vexed questions. First, because we are "Heirs

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of all the Ages," and are beginning to learn how best to use our inheritance; and, second, because we are living under the noon-day sun of a free, ripening civilization, whose most penetrating ray touched the world eighteen hundred years ago, and whose refulgent beams shine upon us with reflected glory as we move on from the past to the future.

We find that for a comprehensive understanding of woman's work in the Nineteenth Century it is necessary: First, that she should be thoroughly acquainted with the atmosphere and movements of the age in which she lives; also the relation of the past to the present, and its true value, as giving that large perspective by which alone we can adequately measure the needs and importance of her work to-day. Second, her right to individual culture and freedom to follow out the highest convictions of reason, subject only to another law, equally sacred, which respects the rights of others to do the same. Third, her exact relation to society, wherein the individual should, or should not, be sacrificed to the general good. Fourth, the

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fact of parentage involves the whole character, and is the cause of the deepest tragedies of life, and calls loudly for a more serious consideration and readjustment of laws, social and legal. Fifth, when conflict arises between soul and body, or reason and feeling, reason must decide, for feeling is only transitory, while reason is abiding and gives strength and self-determination. Sixth, woman's work is largely determined by immutable law, and her labors are inside of this law, and not outside of it; the field is as boundless as space, and as infinite as the soul; she is especially called upon to-day to consecrate anew her powers to the elevation of mankind by making vital the principles of purity, justice, freedom and equality.

THRENODY

THRENODY.

THE poet is above all others the man of spirit, the medium through which the divine will and law is revealed to us. We hear much of Emerson, the philosopher—rarely of Emerson, the poet. Yet I would give the Concord Seer a place among the laurel-crowned.

By prose and poetry Emerson has essayed to answer the yearnings for evidence of things not seen, by a glorious faith and sublime assurance of the harmony of the Universe. This is the legacy he has bequeathed to us, a legacy large, bountiful, beneficent. In Emerson's Threnody we feel that the poet has scaled the heights of joy, drunk deep of the cup of sorrow, soared above the height of despair, into the clear white light of spiritual insight. This poem represents an intelligent, open-eyed, conscious acquiescence in the eternal order of the World;—not a blind "submission" to the will of merciless Jehovah.

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The poem may be divided into four parts. The first one hundred and fifty or two hundred lines give us the agony of the first shock of the bereaved heart; the mourn for the beloved. "Lost, Lost," is the refrain. In the first wild pang of grief, nature's bright joyousness seems a mockery. The south wind brings life, sunshine and desire; but our loved one nature cannot restore. In the first black hours how we miss the voice whose "silver warble" "outvalued every pulsing sound," for whom all beauty, all nature might well exist; because he, the boy soul, is more precious than all, he is the perfect flower of nature. The creative forces still continue; "the trees repair their boughs," but the form we love may not again be re-incarnated. The wail he has "disappeared," nature's "Deep eye" "cannot find him," the soul cannot be re-clothed at our will or insistence. What then is left to us? Where find restitution for this grievous loss? Has our philosopher nothing to offer? Nothing to assuage the world, the severest nature inflicts, when she robs us of our untainted youth? Our Seer says:—"My

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hopes pursue, they cannot bind him." Whither pursue? To future life, to future joy? But the human heart returns again and again to the lament. Nature taunts our pain by the return of "young pines" and building birches, "but finds not the budding man." Then comes the cry of the intellect as well as of the heart, "whither now my truant wise and sweet?" And quickly follows the self-accusing question, how have I forfeited the right "thy steps to watch?" Then the question of the hungry, jealous heart, "hast thou forgot me in a new delight?" Ah! This were indeed bitter pain, to be "so soon forgot?" The heart returns to memory for comfort, recalls those scenes which had gladdened the heart in the happy days gone by, "When every morn my bosom glowed to watch the convoy on the road," and yet again the lament, "The brook into the stream runs on, but the deep-eyed boy is gone."

In the next forty lines we hear the wail of the broken heart. Who has not felt the "needless glow" of all life and sunshine during the first hours of bereavement?

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We ask again and again "Why should every chick of every bird and weed and rock-moss be preferred." Why take this priceless blossom; "For flattering planets seemed to say, '*This* child should ill of ages stay.'"

The writer touches every circle of sorrow, every excuse which the aching soul of man makes to itself for its indulgence in grief. The high, the wonderful, the rare, is entered as a special plea why death should *not* lay his cruel hand upon this fairest bloom. But already we catch a glimpse of that "Good" which may be gathered from these pains.

"The eager Fate which carried three
Took the largest part of me.
For this losing is true dying;
This is lordly man's down lying."

The loosening of earth ties, the yielding of selfish will, and desire, to the order of the universe:

"This his slow but sure declining,
Star by star his world resigning."

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Still the struggle goes on, and he asks—nay, even censures, Nature, when he cries:

“O Truth and Nature’s costly lie,
O trusted, broken prophesy,
O richest fortune, sourly crossed,
Born for the future, to the future lost.”

But again the deeper insight speaks
“weepest thou?” “Worthier cause for
passion wild,” “To be alone wilt thou be-
gin when worlds of lovers hem thee in.”

We are reminded that there are other
loves and lovers, to whom we owe allegi-
ance, that this tie does not incompass the
whole Universe of Love:

“I gave thee sight,—where is it now?
I taught thy heart beyond the reach
Of ritual, Bible or of speech.
Taught thee each private sign to raise,
Lit by the super-solar blaze.”

By this suffering the soul learns more
of life’s richest truths than may be learned
in days of joy. It is a mine of wealth
and revelation. We learn through this

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gift of human love more than may be taught by all books, all Bibles. It has opened up new worlds which we see through the eyes of the beloved. Our gain is far greater than the loss, for the blessed loan of love, the loss is for the present, the temporary only; the gain for all time. The gain is to know that

“’Tis not within the force of Fate
The fate conjoining to separate.”

This is faith, based upon the rock of nature’s undeviating laws, the immortality of all things. This love teaches us “past utterance and past belief, and past the blasphemy of grief, the mysteries of Nature’s heart.” Nothing stronger has ever been written against useless grief, the waste of tears.

“And though no Muse can these impart,
Throb thine with nature’s throbbing
breast,
And all is clear, from East to West.”

No *Muse* can give us truth with the directness with which it comes to us from the “throbbing breast” of human love; if

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wisely comprehended, it gives us the key to the highest. Through the eye of innocence, purity, we learn to know all that is sweetest and best in life. Reproof follows reproof in rapid order, ringing stronger, louder, clearer as the mind gradually perceives light breaking through the darkness. And yet so tenderly with all, kind nature says, "I come to thee as to a friend," not with "tutor's," but a "joyful eye," the eye of love. For our gain and growth we may enjoy "the richest flowering of all art," the divine incarnated in the human form: Through this love and this loss we may know "the riches of sweet Mary's son," and the riches of His sorrow and the world's sorrow, and the world's joy. But life must go on, in spite of all changes in our small personal atmosphere: "high omens ask diviner guess" "And know my higher gifts unbind the zone that girds the incarnate mind."

The higher gifts. What are they? Where are they? They are the glimpses of truth poured into the mind through the meeting of the "Incarnate mind," through which alone the infinite is revealed to the

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finite. Here is the superlative note, the highest moment portrayed by poets and philosophers. The higher gifts, perceived through life's joy and sorrow, release the soul from the close-clinging tenacity to this life and unbind the crust that wraps the soul in earthliness and sets it *free*.

"When the scanty shores are full
With thought's perilous, whirling pool,
When frail nature can no more
Then the spirit strikes the hour.
My servant, death, with solving rite
Pours finite into infinite."

Death is thus beautifully clothed in thought and word. This is the incarnation of faith and trust. Death is God's "servant" and a "solving rite," beautiful as the bursting chrysalis into the butterfly. Then arises the question: Would you have it otherwise? "Wilt thou freeze Love's tidal flow?" Wilt thou with thy puny knowledge question the All-wise? Wilt thou interrogate the "unreplying fate" that has never yet made answer to these agonized questions? But we have the ac-

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cumulated and accumulating race history to answer us, and the consensus of the billions and trillions of hopes and loves and faiths; say in the words of the poet Seer:

“What is excellent, as God lives, is permanent,
Hearts are dust, hearts loves remain,
Heart’s love will meet thee again.”

Lift your soul to the level of the infinite soul, then all is clearly love and wisdom. The future is not a heaven of “adamant and gold” not “stark and cold,” “but a nest of bending reeds, aflowering grass and scented weeds.” The soul yields to love’s decree as bends the reed to the breeze that nourishes and strengthens it. All individual sorrow is merged in the universal; a change of one chord into that of another, a higher. True, this faith is “built of tears and sacred flames,” “and virtue reaching to its aims,” “built of furtherance and pursuing,” “*not* of spent deeds, but of doing.”

Activity is ever the command of nature, stagnation, inertia, is as abhorrent, as a

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vacuum; only by pursuing some high object in life shall the spirit be renewed, not lingering over "spent deeds" or recounting good already accomplished, but ever pressing onward, forward, upward, to new achievements:

"Silent rushes the swift Lord
Through ruined systems still restored.

Broad sowing, bleak and void to bless
Plants with worlds the wilderness."

The infinite spirit moves over and always through all systems, ruined or decaying in their form. From that which *seems* "bleak" and "void" the creative force "plants worlds" of beauty in this wilderness of apparent decay and ruin, and "watered with tears of ancient sorrow," "apples of Eden, ripe to-morrow."

"House and tenement go to ground,"
"Lost in God, in God-head found."

Thus the conditioned, transient is found in the permanent, the unconditioned, the universal.

IMPRACTICABILITY

IMPRACTIBILITY.

THERE is no word more persistently and constantly misused and misapplied than the word practical. It is an especial favorite with the narrow-minded and ignorant. An acquaintance said recently, speaking of one of our greatest modern philosophers, "He has a great mind, but is so very impractical." The fine scorn and air of superiority with which this was said was proof of the pitying contempt in which she held this seer and prophet. It also measured her appreciation of the eternal verities; she scorned all theories, all isms, and saw no deeper than to give the needy their daily bread. Food for the spirit she did not count among the necessities of life. Yet the history of man's spiritual life shows us that the hunger for truth, the passion for righteousness, the yearning

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of the soul for God and Immortality, will sacrifice all material things, even life itself, to these wants. Novalis says, "Philosophy can bake no bread; but she can procure for us God, freedom and immortality."

The more civilized man is, the more differentiated, individualized he is. This differentiation seeks expression and separates itself from the mass. He does not let the masses absorb him, he absorbs the masses. Therefore the one man is worth a thousand other men; one Shakespeare, one Emerson—there is no equivalent to these, in numbers. The man of thought cannot live a gregarious life, he seeks companion with the highest only. We cannot live with the stars if we keep our eyes fixed on the ground. The man of thought cannot be absorbed by surrounding circumstances and conditions, but will absorb them. He takes these up, digests them, retaining what is valuable and casting away the husk; yet many live on the husks alone and think they have lived! There is no such thing in Nature, or man, as absolute identity. Nature abhors iden-

ESSAYS

tity as she abhors a vacuum. This gives us the splendid diversity in human character, and makes its study forever the deepest joy and the deepest pain of mankind.

QUESTIONING

QUESTIONING.

WHAT if imagination's play
Assumes thoughts truer, clearer
way,
And cheats our soul with fancy's dream,
With hopes that are not, only seem?—

If Plato's philosophic scheme
And Jesus's teaching by the stream
Were but fine cerebral fires,
Dying when man expires?

What if the martyrs' faith and hope
Were only passions broader scope,
To realize the general plan
And bridge the space 'twixt God and
Man?—

And all the loves of human hearts
Not perfect wholes, but only parts,
Of the great universal whole,
And lost the individual soul?

ESSAYS

Is song of bird or tint of flower,
Beauty to please a passing hour,
And not to mould our souls to know
Love, above, around, below?

Only nature's sensuous jest,
All the sunsets in the west?
In their colors' vieing glow
Is there nothing we may know?—

Is there never voice of one
Who bids us look beyond the sun,
To Him on whom men ever cry,
When the hour of travail's nigh?

The worshipper of holy fires
To the same lofty heights aspires,
As we, whose souls burn clear and strong,
To strengthen right, to weaken wrong.

Is lost this vast resistless power,
The soldier's calm, the prophet's dower,
Which grows and grows from age to age,
Writ in History's crimsoned page?

From earliest dawn of man's estate
To the last soul who whispers, "Wait,"
We see through faith the best word spoken
Is love, not power, but love unbroken.

ESSAYS

This word must pass from tongue to
tongue,
Its truth throughout the world be rung,
Revealed through Science's open gate,
And souls divinely conquering fate.

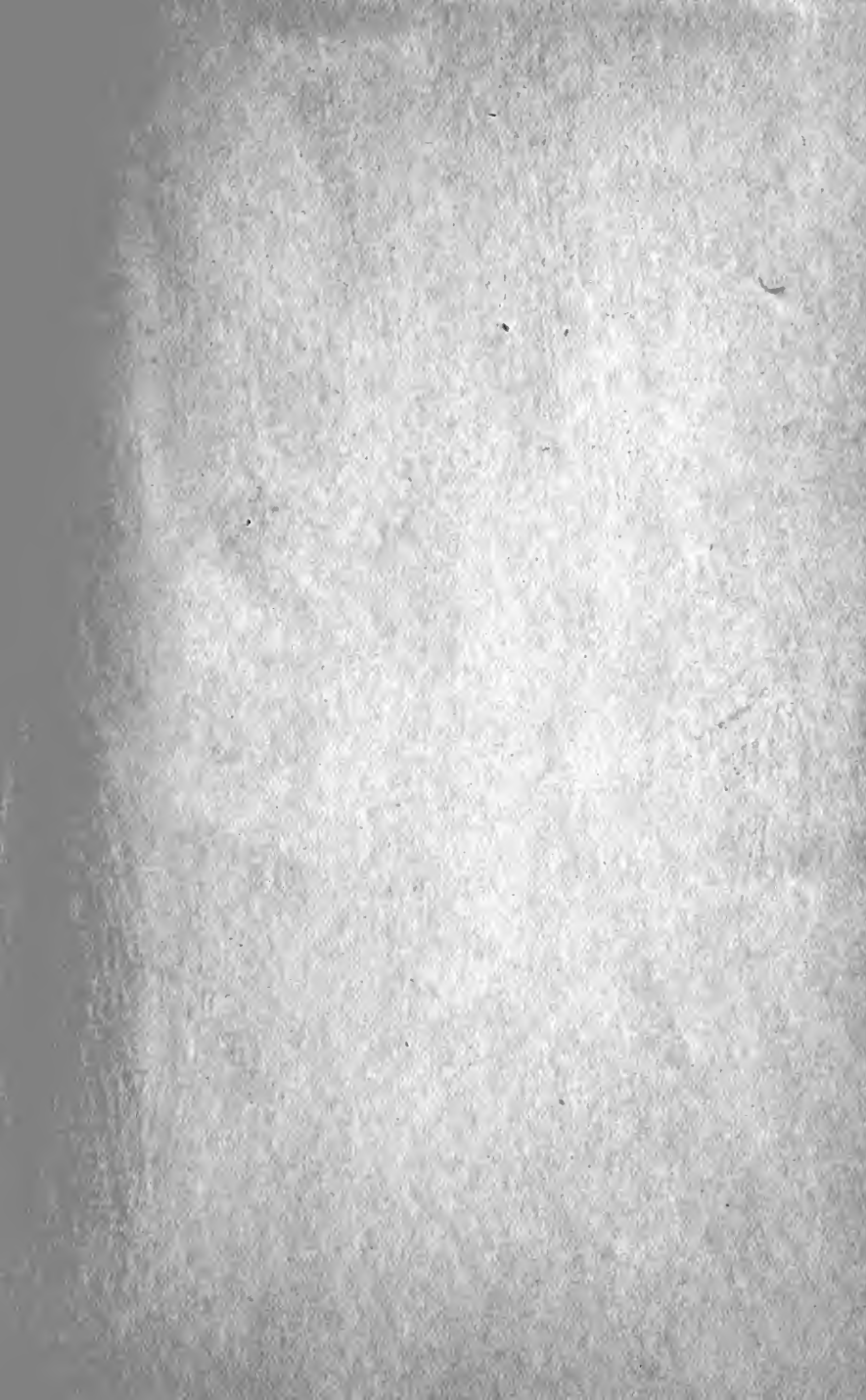
THE END.

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